RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

AUGUSTIN FILON

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1801

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THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE IN ROYAL ROBES

From the picture by Winterhalter

Recollections of the Empress Eugénie

By

Augustin Filon

WITH EIGHT HALF-TONE PLATES

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE writer of the following pages, M. Augustin Filon, was a well-known French man of letters and the author of a number of works of fiction, as well as of many articles, reviews and books on contemporary English politics, art and literature. A sympathetic observer and critic of England, where he had made his home after the revolution of 1870, he greatly helped to make England understood by his countrymen, and may thus be counted among the most useful pioneers of the *Entente Cordiale*.

Born in 1841, in Paris, he took up teaching as a profession after a brilliant school and University career, and for some years lectured in the *Lycées* of Nice and Grenoble. In 1867 he was selected by the then Minister of Education, M. Victor Duruy, to supervise the education of the Prince Imperial, a task to which he devoted his whole time and energy until 1875, when, the Prince being now of age, M. Filon left the Imperial household and married shortly afterwards. During those eight years he was in constant and intimate contact, not only with the Prince, but also with the Emperor and Empress, the latter of whom especially reposed in him an affectionate trust and kept up friendly relations which were broken only by death. During the Empress's Regency in 1870 M. Filon acted as her private secretary, and he was therefore able to speak of the political events of that time with authority and first-hand knowledge. He accompanied the Imperial family to Chislehurst, and was at Woolwich

with the Prince Imperial when the latter was a cadet at the Royal Military Academy. About 1877 M. Filon suffered from a severe illness which necessitated a succession of operations, as a result of which he was almost entirely deprived of the use of his eyes. Some time afterwards he settled definitely in England, first at Margate and later in Croydon, where he died suddenly on May 13, 1916. It was during this period (1880–1916) that he produced the bulk of his literary work, in spite of the great difficulties caused by his sight, which failed him almost entirely during the latter years of his life.

The present "Recollections" were left among his MSS. with instructions that they were not to be published during the lifetime of the Empress. They were not intended by him in any way as a biography of the Empress Eugénie, still less as a panegyric, but as a conscientious record of unbiased personal evidence concerning personalities and events about which there has been much bitter controversy. Hence the personal note which is dominant throughout the book, and which is essential if the reader is to discriminate between what the author has actually witnessed, what he relates at second-hand, and what he has obtained from documents. Whenever his own experiences are not strictly relevant to the immediate subject, M. Filon has kept them carefully in the background: he says nothing, for example, of his own return to France in 1870 to enlist as a soldier, when, as a reward for his patriotic initiative, he was arrested by order of the Republican Government and expelled from France, after being kept for weeks in a cell with a sentence of death hanging over him.

In translating the work (of which the proofs, unfortunately, could not be revised by the author), every effort

has been made to keep scrupulously to the sense of the French original. A few footnotes have been added to make intelligible certain references or expressions which might have puzzled the English reader; and some obvious oversights such as mistakes in spelling of proper names, etc., clearly due to the fact that the author's infirmity made him dependent on other eyes than his own, have been corrected.

It had been M. Filon's intention to have added at the end various notes and appendices. Of these no trace has been found among his papers, and it seems probable that death overtook him before he was able to complete this part of the work. All references in the text to such appendices have therefore been deleted.

The book was primarily addrest to French readers, and has been published almost simultaneously in France. This point of view has been retained in the English translation, as it was felt that any adaptation or modification of the text was both impracticable and undesirable.

Finally, it should be noted that, as the Empress Eugénie survived M. Filon by four years (her death took place on July 11, 1920) these last four years of her life are not dealt with.

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Recollections of the Empress Eugénie

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: MEMORIES OF THE PAST

I WAS first presented to the Empress Eugénie on September 5, 1867, and the day before General Frossard had instructed me in my duties as tutor, or, to be more correct, as assistant-tutor, to the Prince Imperial. The Prince, convalescent after an illness, was then staying at Saint Cloud with a small entourage of three or four people who seemed lost in the immense deserted château, where I had spent the last twenty-four hours, marveling at the magical change in my humble existence, and abandoning myself to the fascination of this royal solitude.

I wandered undisturbed through galleries crowded with art treasures and peopled with memories of the past. Through the half-open windows I listened to the murmuring music of the fountains which "ceased not day nor night," and I watched the sunshine gild the sward once trodden by Marie Antoinette and Marie-Louise.

We smoked an after-dinner cigar in the great Cour d'Honneur, whilst over Paris, so vague and distant, the reflection of many lights gradually spread in the evening sky. Suddenly the sound of wheels and lights moving in regular file directed our attention towards the Avenue.

"It is the Emperor and the Empress!" exclaimed my companions, who were apparently accustomed to these surprise visits, and they rushed off to receive Their Majesties. I followed, and the next instant I found myself in the midst of a number of strangers, none of whom took the smallest notice of me. These gentlemen and ladies followed the sovereigns up the great staircase; I did the same, and by the time we reached the first salon, which was situated between the Prince's study and the aide-de-camp's room, I was so completely hidden that I was greatly surprized when the Empress said to the Emperor:

"I think I notice a new face!"

At once, as if by magic, the crowd parted, and those next to me, who until then had seemed unconscious of my existence, stood aside.

"Let me introduce Louis' new tutor to you," said the Emperor, to whom I had been presented by General Frossard on the preceding Friday; and in these words the Emperor dispensed with the title of assistant-tutor deliberately chosen by the Governor, but never mentioned again.

I bowed so low that I almost missed the smile with which the Empress greeted me. Thereupon the Emperor and the Empress went into their son's room and I saw nothing more of them that evening.

The following day the Court dined at Saint Cloud, and the Empress went with her attendants on a torchlight excursion to Versailles and Trianon. She invited "the young Court," as we were called, to accompany her, and "the young Court" was nothing loath to enjoy itself. Personally I should have loved to revisit the scenes of my childhood in such distinguished company and under

such picturesque conditions, but etiquet obliged us to decline, with a great show of respect, any amusement in which our Prince was unable to participate.

At dinner I sat between Louise Stuart—a niece of the Empress—and the charming Count of Cossé Brissac, who afterwards became one of my friends. I was placed rather prominently, and I felt instinctively that I was being closely observed by the mother of my pupil, who was doubtless curious to know what manner of man M. Duruy and M. Frossard had chosen to instruct her son. I have always been near-sighted, and, as I dared not use my eyeglass, the Empress that night was for me merely a voice!

On September 7 we left for Biarritz. The Empress spoke to me very kindly several times during the journey, but I was too nervous even to glance at her; I only answered in monosyllables, although everyone else seemed wonderfully at ease with her.

We arrived at the Villa Eugénie on Sunday, September 8, and in the afternoon the Empress honored me with a long interview—an interview which banished all my fears and marked the commencement of a succession of surprizes.

I found the Empress entirely different, physically, mentally and morally, from the woman I had imagined her to be. As I had passed the fourteen years of her reign first at a boarding school, then at college, and later in a provincial town, I only knew her by her portraits. Two especially had always struck me: one was the lovely profile by Winterhalter, so often reproduced as an engraving, the original of which I was destined to convey to Camden Place after its rescue by the Registrar of Fontainebleau; the other was an official painting,

copies of which hung in all the important provincial town halls, and which even the color printers of Epinal had failed to spoil entirely.

In it the Empress is shown standing, wearing a magnificent crown of precious stones, with her Imperial mantle sweeping the steps of the throne. Winterhalter had given her the look of a dreamer, a look of mingled sweetness and veiled melancholy, which seemed to search among the shadows of the future or of the past for some unspoken hope or regret. But in the official picture she appears young, dazzling, almost childishly happy, the artist insisting on her face expressing a sort of enraptured wonder at her exalted fortune.

Neither of these pictures conveys any idea of the character or intellect of their subject. When afterwards I saw the Empress, majestic in her imperial splendor, I often noticed in her expression that sweet and dreamy sadness which Winterhalter had sensed and exprest. But when I saw her at close quarters for the first time she recalled neither of these two pictures. There was no posing, no striving after effect; she was far simpler and more natural in her movements and in her speech than any of the ladies who surrounded her, and she seemed to think no more of playing the part of a pretty woman than of assuming the rôle of an Empress.

Many years have passed since that Sunday afternoon at Biarritz, but I can still see her standing on the terrace of the Villa. She had neither hat nor parasol, and, shading her eyes with her tiny gloved hand, she gave little thought to the ravages of a sun almost Spanish in its intensity, a glare which did not spare a complexion already a little faded. It would have been easy for her to have hidden certain marks and lines—hardly visible, perhaps—

left on her face by physical and mental suffering. But she never resorted to artificial aids to beauty, and, beyond using a little harmless rice powder, her only weakness was a penciled line under the eyelashes. She had come to consider that this black line was an essential part of her appearance, and she would not have recognized herself without the artificial shadow which changed the expression of her eyes. I might almost say that her insistence upon it was an expression of her truthfulness. She felt that to be seen without this would have the effect of a disguise, and she once stubbornly refused to do away with the black line when its omission might have been her salvation.

But I must return to the terrace at Biarritz and to our interview. The Empress first asked me to allow her nieces to share some of the Prince Imperial's studies until their governess,[1] whose arrival was daily expected, joined them. Then our conversation turned on the Prince's education. She spoke freely, with a warmth and frankness that alike astonished and charmed me, and from that day she seemed to repose entire confidence in me. She spoke kindly, almost affectionately, of my teacher, Victor Duruy, who was, I had always thought, her pet aversion, and exprest her opinions unsparingly about various persons who were popularly supposed to enjoy her favor.

Her views, far in advance of those propounded for the last thirty years by the best educational authorities, were sound, new and daring. The Empress laid stress upon the development of character above all things. She wanted instilled into her son independent judgment

[1] This governess, chosen from the most distinguished ladies at Saint Denis, was Mlle. Redel, who married Victor Duruy some years later.

combined with proper respect for the rights of others, initiative, and "the courage to think," which, she said, "must precede the courage to act."

Her words made a deep impression on me and dissipated my former idea of her as the flawless beauty who reigned like a fairy queen in the midst of theatrical splendor. Instead, here was a woman who possest both brains and heart, and who inspired me with passionate loyalty.

This first impression might perhaps have faded had it not been subsequently confirmed during the days following. On September 19 I wrote to my mother:

"It is impossible to imagine anyone so fascinating and at the same time so regal as the Empress, and one is naturally impelled to try to please her and to deserve her gracious regard. She combines a chivalrous and impulsive nature with a mind whose practical knowledge and accuracy continually astonishes even the expert. She argues with a brilliance which absolutely dumbfounds me, and she possesses that wonderful gift, rarely found in a woman—the gift of eloquence." [1]

As the Empress showed herself to me, so she showed herself to others. The Emperor was constantly asking people questions, and he received their replies with a vague mutter which might have been interpreted in many ways, but as he also inclined his head and smiled with his eyes and with his lips, the person interrogated fully

[1] Yet the Empress often used to amuse herself by telling us how, during certain State functions, she never spoke a word, and once practically ran away in the middle of the ceremony when she was presiding at the Société du Prince Impérial. Personally, I regard these anecdotes merely as harmless jokes at her own expense, because I never once found her at a loss for the right word to suit the occasion, no matter whether it called for tact, energy, or picturesque effect. It was no good believing all she said about herself. She once told me she was a coward on a certain day when she showed extraordinary courage.

believed that his listener was charmed with his conversation. The Empress was an ardent debater, and it seemed to me that she liked best those who contradicted her most boldly. Among these at Biarritz in 1867 I remember Admiral Jurien de la Gravière and Baron Corvisart. The others grumbled against them and accused them of "over-exciting the Empress," as if it were the greatest crime to make her talk! I soon became guilty of the same offense. The Empress knew that I was wholly devoted to her, although I never looked as if I were dying of love for her! My attitude pleased her and was the primary cause of the regard which she always showed me—a regard which suffered occasional eclipses, but which ever returned, and which has been the pride of my life. This regard earned for me very precious confidences. I noted these down at the time, almost in the Empress's own words, and I shall relate them in the order of the times at which they were made, and add such further details as I have gathered from unpublished letters which have been communicated to me or from the statements of entirely trustworthy eye-witnesses.

I shall eliminate the innumerable second-hand anecdotes, no matter how interesting they may be or from what "authentic" source they are supposed to emanate. The pages of this book will not, therefore, constitute a consecutive narrative, and they must not be looked upon in the smallest degree as a life of the Empress, but, on the other hand, they possess a kind of autobiographical interest, because the Empress speaks through me; and failing those recollections which we should have been so thrilled to read, and which she would never consent to write, there will be found some trace of her personal impressions in much which I have set down.

"I was born," said the Empress to me, "during an earthquake. . . . My mother's accouchement took place beneath a tent in our garden. What would the ancients have thought of such an omen? Surely they would have said I was destined to unsettle the world."

The Empress often spoke of her father and mother. She had a sort of religious veneration for her father's memory, and mentioned his eccentricities in the most tender and touching manner, even when she was obliged to smile at the recollection of them! All those who knew her intimately will remember that Count Cyprien de Montijo's miniature never left her possession, and from the first day of our exile I found it on her table, exactly as I had seen it so often at the Tuileries. Part of the Count's face was hidden by a black bandage which spoke of a glorious wound received in the service of France, and his fine pale features were not unlike those of his daughter. Eugénie was, body and soul, a true Montijo, but a little infusion of Flemish and Scotch blood endowed her with the common sense which was so apparent in her at certain times and which counterbalanced the heroic follies of her Spanish ancestry.

The Empress's father assumed the title of Count of Montijo on the death of his eldest brother Eugenio, uncle and godfather to his child. These two men would be objects of general admiration were their record better known. Eugenio made a magnificent and despairing effort to overthrow the infamous Manuel Godoï, and as a recompense he received the insults of a dull and commonplace world which grovels in the mud before success:

Sed quid
Turba Remi? Sequitur Fortunam, ut semper, et odit
Damnatos. . . .

In 1845 M. Thiers begged Mérimée to use his influence with Mme.de Montijo and ask her to give him some particulars about her brother-in-law's character and adventures. This information he distorted with that cynical contempt for the truth which was characteristic of the man.

The younger brother, Colonel Portocarrero, was a liberal-minded philosopher who loved France because to him she represented the home of philosophy and liberty. But he also admired genius and glory, and for that reason he served France and Napoleon. It was he who, in 1814, at the head of the young pupils of the École Polytechnique, fired the last shots on the advancing Allies from the cannons of Montmartre. He was thus a fit object of persecution for Ferdinand VII, and was treated by him accordingly. As for his wife, the Comtesse de Montijo, I never saw her. I knew her by an exquisite portrait by Goya, by what the Empress told me, and above all by the unpublished letters of Mérimée, which cover a period of thirty-one years with the exception of a few breaks and some slackening towards the end of the correspondence. The personality of the Comtesse de Montijo lives in these letters addrest to her by Mérimée, which enlighten us as to her tastes, her occupations, her character, and her attitude towards her friends and her daughters. It is impossible to deny her rare and understanding knowledge of literature, history and politics. I have already told in my book, *Mérimée et ses amis*, how the Comtesse de Montijo assisted the famous writer in his philological and archeological researches, and even supplied him with plots for novels. "My mother," said the Empress to me, "wished to make everybody happy, but in her own way, not in theirs. . . ."

The Comtesse de Montijo placed on a pinnacle all

persons or things in which she took a personal interest—first and foremost her own daughters, whom she praised in their hearing in a somewhat disconcerting way. Even her stunted little trees at Carabanchel loomed larger in her eyes than the majestic chestnuts at the Tuileries! Her sublime optimism enabled her to succeed, and she triumphed over difficulties because she never acknowledged their existence.

"Listen!" continued the Empress. "You know Lesseps, my mother's first cousin; well, he has exactly the same temperament. Both have achieved the impossible. When my mother knew she was going blind she made incredible efforts to hide her infirmity from strangers and from herself. She insisted on directing her own steps as well as those of others, she knocked over furniture, she hurt herself against walls which she could not see, she attempted to walk through closed doors! So great an effort did it cost her to acknowledge herself beaten—even by an infirmity."

From the letters of Mérimée and from what the Empress has told me I am sure that the Comtesse de Montijo was a born match-maker. Matrimonial projects for her daughters were her first preoccupation: in her leisure hours she pulled wires for candidates to the Académie Française. She lived in a little world of her own peopled with friends, protégés, hangers-on, with whom she always kept in touch and of whose interests she never lost sight in the midst of her multiple activities. The Comtesse has been falsely suspected of many weaknesses; it would have been more accurate to have accused her of the sin of ambition. But her ambition was never unreasonable, and she more than justified it by her sterling qualities, rare in a woman, of constancy, energy and courage. As

"Camerara mayor," during the years 1847 and 1848, she acted, in a certain sense, as a member of the Narvaez Cabinet, and her influence was so great that it aroused the jealousy of the Prime Minister. When, against the advice of her elder daughter, and almost without the knowledge of the one most intimately concerned, she played the bold hand which won for Eugénie de Guzman[1] the title of Empress of the French, she doubtless dreamed of wielding a great political influence in France. She was cruelly disillusioned, but it is only just to admit that this influence, had it existed, would have been both intelligent and liberal.

Days of greatness were as yet far distant when the exiled Montijos first came to Paris and took up their abode in very modest lodgings. "We were not well off," said the Empress to me, "and my father was quite right when he said that he wished us to become accustomed early to the poverty which he believed would be our lot in life. But he carried things rather too far when he made us wear linen gowns in all weathers and in all seasons, and when he would not allow my mother to buy us umbrellas or even to take us with her in a carriage."

The education of the two little girls was somewhat neglected, but they spent some time at the Sacré-Cœur, one of the best convents in Paris. They also took lessons in music and painting, but the progress made by the Empress in these accomplishments is not to be judged from the following story she used to tell against herself.

One day a friend called to see them and exclaimed: "Well, it's quite plain to see that you are living in furnished rooms!"

"How is that?"

[1] The full maiden name (in Spanish) of the Empress was: Eugenia Guzman y Palafox y Portocarrero; de Montijo and de Têba were the family titles (Translator's Note).

"Well, look at those horrible daubs on the walls. . . . They stamp the place!"

"And they were *my* watercolors!" said the Empress in pitiful tones.

But if this story is true the visitor was no judge. I have seen several watercolors by the Empress which were charming in conception and color, and very fine and soft in tone.

The Empress asserted that she could not sing a note, but nevertheless she loved music. French light opera was, however, little to her taste. "Just as one is getting interested in what they are saying they start singing," she used to say, "and when one is interested in their singing they start talking." Nor did she care for some of the Italian operas, being little moved by florid flights or vocal arpeggios of song, but she was sensitive to the quality of sound, sentiment and style, and I have seen her moved to tears by songs which touched some sympathetic chord in her soul.

Notwithstanding her precarious fortunes, the Comtesse de Montijo moved in the best Parisian society. At this time she knew the Castellanes and the Delesserts, and Cécile Delessert, the daughter of M. Gabriel Delessert, became the intimate friend of Eugénie de Montijo. After her marriage with the Comte de Nadaillac, who was an avowed enemy of the dynasty, this friendship did not cease, and, although the Comtesse de Nadaillac did not appear at official receptions, she made frequent visits to the Tuileries, and was invited in 1869 to accompany the Empress to the opening of the Suez Canal. Edouard Delessert was often a guest at the Tuileries and at Compiègne, and it was hinted that he had once entertained towards his sister's former playmate a feeling warmer than friendship.

Madame de Montijo also moved in artistic and literary circles. Mérimée, whom her husband had introduced to her in Spain, on the occasion of the first journey made by the author of "Clara Gazul" across the Pyrenees, was her greatest literary friend, and he introduced her to many of his acquaintances, amongst others Stendhal, whom the two children knew as "Monsieur Beyle," by which name the Empress called him to the end.

"He used to come to our rooms in the evening," said the Empress, "and, taking us both on his knees, he would tell us about the campaigns of Napoleon. His visits were red-letter days, and we could hardly be persuaded to go to bed."

I do not believe the Empress ever read a line Stendhal wrote, but after sixty years she still preserved her first ideal of him. To her he was always a dear old man who adored little girls and who was a wonderful talker. And this tarnisher of souls first awakened heroic instincts within her; this pitiless realist inoculated her with the worship of greatness and the sense of the wonderful in history!

About this time she also indulged in a sort of "heroine" worship for Mademoiselle Rachel. The great tragedienne, who was then making her first appearances, often visited the Comtesse de Montijo and gave her tickets for the theater.

"Rachel used to say she wanted us to be quite near to her," said Eugénie, "and so we always sat in the nearer left-hand box of the lower tier (reserved under the Empire for the Superintendent of Fine Arts). Our emotion, our enthusiasm, our tears, inspired her, and she read in our dilated eyes the gradual crescendo of her tragic power." At that time Rachel seemed to Eugénie de Montijo as a

being placed beyond the follies and weaknesses of humanity. Years after the Emperor enlightened her as to another side of her heroine's character.[1]

She never swerved in her belief in Rachel's genius, and one April evening in 1885, at Farnborough, she recited Phèdre's great speech, beginning with the words: "Oui, prince, je languis, je brûle pour Thésée!" and invested the declamation with all her undying memories of the great artist.

It was after dinner; the men were in the billiard-room and three ladies were sitting with the Empress. My wife was one of them, and she told me how imprest she was by the forceful way in which the Empress rendered Phèdre's passionate words.

I must return to these bygone days of childhood and girlhood, when the little girl who was to be known as the Empress Eugénie appears in two widely different anecdotes. Eugénie de Téba was only two years old when Mérimée was first introduced to the Comtesse de Montijo. Some years later a friend met him in the Rue de la Paix, holding the hand of a charming little girl of five or six. Struck by the grace and prettiness of the child, Mérimée's friend asked who she was. "Oh! it's a little Spaniard," said Mérimée. "She is the daughter of one

[1] I have seen an interesting letter from Prince Louis Napoleon to M. Vieillard, in which he introduces Mademoiselle Rachel, and begs him to act as guide to an inexperienced young girl threatened with many dangers, and beset by innumerable temptations. At the time this letter was written Rachel was his mistress. I have been told this as a fact by the Empress herself, who related the following anecdote à propos of the liaison. Rachel once went on tour through the North of England and Prince Louis accompanied her. As a sort of "third" the young Prince Napoleon Jerome traveled in the compartment with them. Prince Louis dropped off to sleep, but happening to wake, he saw his cousin and his mistress engaged in ardent love-making. The Prince closed his eyes, said nothing, and peacefully continued his journey, but the next day he took the train back to London. The Empress added, smiling, "Now, wasn't that exactly like him?"—"Like both of them," I commented.

of my friends . . . and I am taking her to have a feast of cakes." [1]

Another day, some years later, when Eugénie was walking on the Boulevard with her sister, they noticed a pauper funeral on its way to Père Lachaise. Not a single person followed the corpse, not even the traditional dog who, in the well-known picture, alone mourns his master. The sight of this lonely funeral aroused feelings of sorrow in the hearts of the two young girls. "Let us follow it," they said; and they walked behind the hearse and stood beside the last resting-place of the unknown dead. The Empress Eugénie never forgot this melancholy funeral, the corpse interred without a blessing or a tear, and from this memory originated the foundation of the "Aumôniers des dernières prières," whose duties fulfilled the wish of the Empress that religion should always be represented at funerals where family and friends were non-existent.

A new reign, which broke away from the traditions of Ferdinand VII, reopened the doors of Spain to the exiles and restored their worldly possessions. But the Count was at first the only member of the family to benefit by this new order of things, and it was only after his death in 1839 that the mother and daughters recrossed the Pyrenees. Then a different life began for them. If I am not mistaken, I think it was at this time that their English governess, Miss Flowers, was with them, and her name was frequently mentioned by the Empress in a half-smiling, half-remorseful manner. "*Poor* Miss Flowers," she said; and one guessed what a series of shocks these impetuous girls must have given an old maid brought up on lines favored by Miss Edgeworth and Jane Austen. England was then a mixture of senti-

[1] Preface by Louis Fagan. "Letters from Mérimée to Panizzi."

mentality and prudishness, and it had not begun to take the interest in sport or flirtation it afterwards displayed. Miss Flowers taught her pupils English, and succeeded fairly well. The Empress pronounced English words correctly, but her vocabulary was limited, and in consequence she rather shrank from speaking this language. As for her mother tongue, her long stay in France did not appear to have made any difference to her knowledge of Spanish. I have been told by men of high breeding and intellectual culture that the Empress spoke the purest Castilian, and that her enunciation was of a classical dignity and clearness. As a matter of fact, when she talked to her former compatriots a stranger would have noticed the difference between the usual hurried little "explosions" which characterize ordinary Spanish conversation and the pure and sustained way in which the Empress exprest herself.

Even before recrossing the Pyrenees, Eugenie had written to Mérimée; the gaiety of Madrid was powerless to make either herself or her sister forget the friends they had left behind, as is shown by the two following letters, both addrest to Beyle.

The original letters belong to a well-known collector who recently communicated their contents to the Press. The first is dated December, 1839.

"Monsieur,—I have received your letter with great pleasure. I await impatiently the year 1840, when you say we may hope to see you again. I am learning to paint in oils, and I am laughing and working just as I did in the past. Mama finds time to give us some lessons, and we are trying not to forget what we learnt in Paris.

"At the present moment Spain is in a very unsettled

state. Everyone is crying out for peace, and Maroto, the Carlist general, has gone over to Cristino's party for quite a large bribe, which is not pretty; and all the other minor officers have followed his example. Navarre, Alava, Guipuzcoa and Biscaye have declared for the legitimate Queen. It is said that Don Carlos and the Duchess of Bura have gone to France; Cabrera is making for Jaramon, and twenty mounted men have gone to report the enemy's movements. At Madrid there have been great fêtes in honor of the Peace Proclamation, but peace has been proclaimed so often that nobody believes in it though everybody wants it. Mama, my sister and Miss Flowers present their compliments to you, and I am, sir,—Your devoted and affectionate friend,

"E. Guzman y Palafox."

The second letter is dated December, 1840, and, although it is signed by the elder girl, it seems to me to express the feelings of both sisters.

"Madrid, December, 1840.

"My dear Sir.—It is a long time since I have had the pleasure of writing to you, but I have been prevented from doing so on account of a journey we have made to Toledo, where we saw some really magnificent things. Really, sir, you must make up your mind to come to Spain. Try to come at the present time when the Queen is at Barcelona and at Valence, and from there you will only have to travel by diligence for three days to reach Madrid and make your little friends happy. We can have our happy talks once again. Here our only amusements are to go out after dinner to a house in the country, where we run about like really happy girls. We have no friends,

as the girls in Madrid are so stupid and they only talk about dress, although sometimes, for a change, they say horrible things about each other. I do not like those kinds of friends. And when I pay a call I fidget all the time, and only speak when I say good-by. You ought to be very happy to think that the ashes of Napoleon are to be brought back to France. I am, too, and I should like to be in Paris for the ceremony. You will certainly have to go to Paris, but before doing so come here and we will travel back together.

"Adieu, my dear sir, and believe in the friendship of your affectionate

"Paca Portocarrero y P."

The country house mentioned in the above letter was Carabanchel, and the Empress could never mention the name, even in the years of sadness, without a smile lighting her face like a ray of youth. Carabanchel was built as a whim of the famous Minister Cabarrus, who, by some chance of Fate, was the father of Mme. Tallien and the great-uncle of the Empress Eugénie. He had built a residence and laid out a park in a spot which an ungrateful and refractory Nature had refused to adorn in any way. She seemed to have been conquered, but she never definitely acknowledged her defeat. Besides, what did it matter? The attractions of Carabanchel in those happy days consisted chiefly in those who lived there and who idealized it with their charm and adorned it with their beauty. Love was in the very air. Mérimée used to say that he heard love-sighs in every corner.

Dancing took place at Carabanchel. The inmates acted comedies, they sang grand opera—nothing daunted Madame de Montijo! I asked the Empress what part she

took in these entertainments, but I could only get her to tell me one story of Carabanchel, and, as usual, it was against herself.

"As I could neither sing nor play," she said, "I was told to walk on in *Norma*, carrying the little child whose presence is necessary in the scene. I entered with the baby, who at once commenced to cry loudly, probably because I was so nervous that I did not notice that I was holding it head downwards. I hurriedly put the baby on a chair and rushed off the stage. I was never asked to do anything again. So now you know all about my career as an actress!" [1]

It is easy to see from the letter to Stendhal (Beyle) how the memories of Napoleon survived in the imagination of the two girls, and an incident in their life now added fresh interest to this feeling, and transformed what had been a cult of memories into a romantic reality. It is now that the name and the personality of Prince Louis-Napoleon, crowned with a halo of suffering and persecution, comes into the life of Eugénie, and at this period the romance of Louis-Napoleon and Eugénie de Guzman first begins.

I shall relate the story exactly as the Empress told it to me at Camden Place in the summer of 1873, some months after the death of the Emperor; I wrote down her account, as nearly as possible in her own words, directly I had gained the sanctuary of my own room.

[1] The Empress commanded a performance of *Les Portraits de la Marquise* at the Tuileries. The remembrance of the rehearsals always afforded her the greatest enjoyment, especially when Octave Feuillet, the author of this "bluette," talked theatrical slang to the actors, and told the jeune premier not to "sit on her." He also said to him, "Why, you're snuffling through your nose (*nasonner*); why on earth are you snuffling like that?"

CHAPTER II

THE ROMANCE OF LOUIS-NAPOLEON AND EUGÉNIE DE GUZMAN—AFTER THE MARRIAGE

I WILL let the Empress relate her own story:

"We often used to take the waters at various health resorts in the Pyrenees," said she, "and we had many friends and acquaintances in that part of France. When we were staying at Pau we saw a great deal of the Marquise de Castelbajac, mother of the Marquis,[1] with whom you are acquainted, and one evening at the Marquise's an artiste named Madame Gordon sang to us. We knew nothing about Madame Gordon beyond the fact that she had taken some part in the Strasburg conspiracy three or four years previously, but this was quite enough to excite our keen interest. She spoke incessantly of 'her prince' whom she was soon about to visit at Ham, and I simply drank in her words. I leave you to imagine my feelings! A conspirator—a prisoner—a prince—a Napoleon! All the necessary elements of romance were at hand. I dreamed of making a pilgrimage to the prison. Carried away by my enthusiasm, my mother allowed herself to become a convert to this scheme, and it was arranged that we should accompany Madame Gordon on her forthcoming visit to Prince Louis. But just then a revolution took place—which one I cannot remember: there have been so many in Spain! We were

[1] The Marquis de Castelbajac, Equerry to the Emperor until 1870. He was one of the most handsome men I have known. His respectful loyalty towards his sovereigns never wavered.

obliged to return to Madrid, and our plans to accompany Madame Gordon came to nothing.[1]

"On her return from Ham, Madame Gordon came to see us in Madrid, and everything she told us about the Prince stirred my sympathies. You must remember that the soil had been well prepared by my father's recollections and by M. Beyle's tales of the great Emperor.

"The Napoleonic religion was in my blood, and I would have felt it an easy matter to lay down my life for the heir to such a name.

"After the revolution of February, when the Prince was elected President, we were presented to him at the Elysée by Bacciochi, a friend of my mother's. My first words to him were, 'Monseigneur, we have often spoken about you to a lady who is absolutely devoted to your interests.'

"'And pray what is her name?'

"'Madame Gordon.'

"The Prince looked at me rather strangely. He knew, although I did not, what rôle Madame Gordon had played before she was accepted by the most exclusive set in society as a great artiste! She had been the mistress of Colonel Vaudrey at the time of the Strasburg conspiracy, and it was even asserted that she had had relations with the Prince.[2] But this is absolutely untrue.

"Some time after this my mother and I were invited

[1] It is well known that Madame Gordon did not exaggerate her relations with the Prince and the principal members of the Bonapartist party. She was instrumental in bringing Louis-Napoleon and Louis Blanc together, and they afterwards exchanged letters and visits. Louis Blanc, in his "History of the Revolution of 1848," which is hardly history, but rather an autobiography and an apologia, relates how, on one of his visits to Ham, the Prince, after taking leave of him, called from the top of the staircase, "Kiss Mrs. Gordon for me."

[2] The Prince denied this report in the postscript of an unpublished letter which I have seen.

to dine at Saint Cloud. When we arrived at the palace we found carriages waiting to take us to Combleval, a little house in the park, halfway between Saint Cloud and Villeneuve. We were in full evening toilets, as we expected to meet numerous other guests. Imagine our surprize when we only found the Prince-president and Bacciochi!

"When we rose from dinner the Prince gave me his arm and proposed a 'walk in the park.' It was in summertime, when the days were near their longest. Bacciochi approached my mother and offered himself as her escort. But I was before him, and I said to the Prince, 'Monseigneur, . . . my mother is here,' and I stepped aside to let him see that the honor of accepting his arm was her due. The Prince offered his arm to my mother without saying another word, and I took that of Bacciochi." At the memory of this incident the Empress smiled mischievously. "I don't think he enjoyed *that* evening," she said; and continuing: "My sister scolded us severely the day after this adventure, and it was deemed advisable for us to go away and let the memory of our imprudence be forgotton as quickly as possible; so, if I remember rightly, we went for a trip to the Rhine country.

"Two years passed. On December 2, 1851, when the issue of the struggle then raging seemed doubtful, I wrote to Bacciochi and told him that in the event of failure I wished to place all I had in the world at the Prince's disposal. Bacciochi kept this letter in his pocket and showed it to the Prince when all danger was over. It was thus that our relations were reestablished on a different footing. The Prince now understood us much better, and the memory of poor Madame Gordon no longer compromised us.

"In 1851 we were invited to the great hunting parties at Fontainebleau. I was first at the death, and I received the stag's foot from the Prince himself. General Fleury—then Major Fleury—told me that etiquet demanded, as I had the stag's foot, I should enter the château with the Prince. I thought this was a simple old custom, of no more importance than the honors paid to a 'Twelfth Night Queen,' but I was mistaken; and this triumphal entry was the beginning of a long series of petty calumnies and jealousies. It was at Compiègne that the Prince first spoke to me of love, but I treated it lightly—almost as a joke.

"On New Year's Day, 1852, the Empire had been in existence for exactly three weeks. My mother and I went to the first official reception, and we curtsied low to the new Emperor. Everyone was looking at me. At the ball that night, or the next night,[1] I met Madame Fortoul just as we were going in to supper. Madame Fortoul insulted me publicly, saying in a loud voice that she wondered I dared presume to enter a room before her. I became very pale, but I drew back, saying as I did so, 'Pass, Madame.'

"A number of small supper tables had been arranged in the Salle des Maréchaux. I had been commanded to sit at the Imperial table, and my distress did not escape the Emperor's notice. He rose and came to my chair. Standing behind me, he bent down and spoke to me.

"'What is the matter?" he said.

"'Oh, Sire—I beg you—do not ask me now—everyone is watching us,' I replied.

"After supper the Emperor insisted on knowing the

[1] I reproduce this typical uncertainty about dates.

cause of the trouble. 'I *will* know the truth. What has happened to you?' he demanded.

"'Sire, I have been insulted to-night, but I shall not be insulted a second time,' I answered.

"'To-morrow,' said the Emperor, 'nobody will dare insult you.'

"No sooner did we reach home than we made plans for our departure. We decided to go to Italy, but on the morrow my mother received a formal proposal of marriage for me from the Emperor; and before the end of this same month of January," concluded the Empress, "we were married at Notre Dame."

Madame de Montijo had been responsible for the whole matrimonial campaign, and had played her great game with a boldness which the rest of the family had stigmatized as dangerous, and indeed was so in the highest degree. She triumphed for the moment, but some months afterwards she left Paris suddenly with her confidant and friend Mérimée, who, I believe, traveled with her as far as Tours, and heard the full story of her grievances. Her son-in-law had made it absolutely clear to her that if she remained in France she would be treated merely as a distinguished foreigner. I have found traces of her disappointment in the correspondence between Mérimée and Madame de Montijo, as all her letters written to him at this time are full of epigrammatical remarks about the Emperor, whom she calls "Monsieur Isidore."

As to the Empress, I greatly doubt if she contributed in any way to the realization of her exalted state. She let herself be guided by circumstances, and I think she lived in a kind of fairy tale, fascinated more by the

strangeness of her destiny than by any vulgar ambition. She detested politics from the first moment that she understood them, and she not only disliked power but she had no desire for luxury. I once heard her say to a young girl brought up in wealthy surroundings, who contemplated marrying a poor man, "You are far less suited to be a poor man's wife than I was at your age." I am sure that this statement was true. I have never heard the Empress utter a falsehood.

For many years[1] the intimacy between the Emperor and the Empress ought to have been as close and tender as it should be when a man and woman marry for love. Was it indeed love, and was it reciprocal? Nearly twenty years separated them, and such a gulf is not easily bridged even by those women who seem especially designed by nature to love men much older than themselves. I do not believe that the Empress was one of these women. Her feeling for the Emperor was probably less than passionate affection, but deeper than friendship, and grew steadily in intensity until the fatal day when she discovered her husband's unfaithfulness.

Prince Louis-Napoleon had known love many times in his life before he met Eugénie de Guzman, and he still preserved, at the age of fifty, some of those qualities which endear men to women, particularly that quiet, sympathetic manner and an almost feminine sweetness of gesture and speech which constitute so great a charm in a strong man. A keen but kindly observer, he understood woman, and loved her in her varying moods of impatience, nerves and weakness, which to him were added graces.

[1] The Empress was always quite willing to talk about the period preceding her marriage, but she never mentioned to me the years that followed, nor was it to be expected that she would.

The Empress easily discovered the existence of this rather weak kindness of heart, but it was not this rather doubtful quality which retained her affection. What endeared the Emperor to her was her unfailing belief that he invariably acted honestly. This honesty, this essential unity of outlook and thought, was in her opinion the key to a character which many have considered a moral enigma. In one of our last conversations, when we were discussing a book on Napoleon III which was about to be written by a celebrated historian, she insisted upon this very point. "Tell him that if he does not admit that sincerity was the Emperor's greatest virtue he will have failed to understand him." And it must be clearly understood that sincerity was, in the eyes of the Empress, the first of all the virtues, without which the others could not exist.

She always maintained towards the Emperor an attitude of respect. In spite of his habit of calling her "Eugénie" and addressing her as "tu," I never heard the Empress use the familiar "tu" or call the Emperor "Louis." We know, however, that she did use this mode of address when they were alone together and in their private correspondence; this has been revealed by the letters written by her from Egypt and published after 1871 by the Commission which dealt with the papers found at the Tuileries.

One day, and one day only, she omitted to show the Emperor that marked respect from which she never deviated, and I find that I have written down the particulars of this strange scene in my diary exactly as it took place less than four months after my admission into the household.

In November, 1867, widespread anxiety prevailed on the day of the opening of Parliament. One word from

the Emperor on this fateful occasion would alarm the public as to the possibility of war, or reassure it as to the certainty of peace.

It was absolutely necessary that the Prince Imperial should be present at this ceremony in order to silence the malicious gossip which represented him as being a cripple or a hopeless invalid since his recent illness. What would happen to France if this only hope of the dynasty were lost? Most assuredly his absence on that day would have brought about a collapse on the Bourse. The Emperor's speech, the public appearance of the Prince, constituted the two chief interests of the day. The great square of the Carrousel was black with spectators, and all the most important public bodies were already waiting in the Salle des États. At this moment on the ground floor of the Tuileries, in the low-ceilinged and overheated suite sacred to the Emperor and looking out on the gardens, six persons were gathered, of whom several were speaking at the same time in a heated tone. These persons were the Emperor, the Empress, the Prince Imperial, his tutor, Miss Shaw (his English nurse) and Baron Corvisart.

The Prince, who was drest for the occasion in a black velvet suit, red silk stockings and the Grand Order of the Légion d'Honneur, had been suddenly taken ill during luncheon and had abruptly left the room, followed by myself, and Miss Shaw had presently joined us both in the Emperor's study. There he lay, in a fainting condition and deadly pale, in the arms of the Empress, who, like the Emperor, was wearing full State robes, and Corvisart, who had been summoned in haste, had just arrived. The shock and consternation were great. What could have caused this sudden indisposition? Miss Shaw,

who completely lost her head, told the Emperor that the previous evening the little Prince had received a violent blow from one of his playfellows. "It is the fault of M. Corvisart; he *will* excite them," she said.

"Is this true?" said the Empress to me.

"I was not there," I replied. (I had received permission to consider every Sunday at my own disposal.) "But I have always noticed that the Prince's playfellows show thought and care beyond their years when they are fighting their mimic battles. The Prince is suffering from nothing more or less than a bilious attack."

The Emperor had not heard my words. He was upbraiding Corvisart most severely. I have never seen him in a temper except on that day.

"You are stupid," exclaimed the Empress. "You must make sure of the facts before getting angry. Miss Shaw is talking nonsense."

At that moment, as if to prove the truth of my diagnosis, the Prince became violently sick; and although the patient was heir to a throne, and although the porcelain basin was held by the Empress and was ornamented with crowned golden eagles, the process was the same in a palace as in a hospital, lacking none of the usual unpleasant and painful details. But to our great relief the child, who now seemed completely recovered, said he was quite able to go with his parents, and we all set to work with a will to wipe his face, brush his clothes, and repair the general disorder of his array. I then placed the Prince in a roller chair and pushed him across the unfinished rooms of the Tuileries, then along the great "galerie du bord de l'eau," until we reached the entrance to the Salle des États. I remained in the galerie completely hidden by an immense curtain which hung behind

the throne, and from my coign of vantage I heard the voice of the Emperor. His calm, clear and strong accents rose and fell in such a deep and religious hush that I could have easily imagined that the Emperor was speaking in an empty room. Yet all Europe was listening! Could this be the same man to whom, barely a quarter of an hour ago, a woman had said, "You are stupid!"

This tragi-comedy which I have exhumed after so many years will perhaps amuse those who like to see the rulers of this world in somewhat ridiculous attitudes and to convince themselves that the great can sometimes be small. It is this sort of pleasure that one looks for in the pages of the Duc de Saint-Simon. But my readers will be wrong if they imagine that this story throws a new light upon the relations which existed between husband and wife. I repeat most emphatically that this was the only time that I saw the Empress depart from her habitual deference to the Emperor.

She often addrest him in the third person, as was our custom, and cherished in her heart the same unvarying respect for his intelligence and character. The unhappy Prince Charming who had fired Eugénie's youthful imagination as the hero of her early romance had long since disappeared, but in his place she saw a great and honest man who wanted to do good and who pursued this aim—sometimes by a roundabout path when the straight road was not possible. Under a mask of indifference Napoleon III suffered greatly from the thousand calumnies which assailed him, and the Empress realized that her duty was to sustain him, encourage him, and bind up those hidden wounds which bled for her alone. Never woman accepted a mission with more magnanimous resolution or more indefatigable energy.

His affection for her had also undergone a change. In the early days he had loved and desired her passionately for her eyes, her smile, her exquisite grace, for the indescribable fascination which radiated from her and made her as one apart, but when this passion and desire were satisfied he was ever discovering in her soul unsuspected depths of moral beauty. Each day he respected and admired her more and more, until at last, without acknowledging it to her, or even perhaps to himself, he came to regard her as his second conscience; and—may I say without offense to a venerated memory—the Emperor's second conscience was often better and more reliable than his first. But why conjectures and guesses? In confirmation of my statement it will suffice to read the Emperor's pen portrait of the Empress which appeared in the *Dix-Décembre*:[1]

"The Comtesse de Téba has not disappeared in the splendor of the Crown of France. The Empress still remains a woman of simple and natural tastes. After her visit to those stricken with cholera at Amiens the chorus of approval which came from every quarter in praise of her courageous initiative caused her nothing but surprize and was at last supremely distasteful to her.[2] The lot of the suffering community always excites her sympathy, and she loves to occupy herself with all kinds of social

[1] The article appeared in the first number of this paper (November 15, 1868) under the following signature: "For the Editor of the *Dix-Décembre*. A. Grenier." But everyone knew who was the actual writer.

[2] The Empress once said to my wife at Farnborough, "I really did nothing wonderful when I went to see those suffering with cholera at Amiens. *I knew that I should never be attacked by cholera.* But I was dreadfully frightened when I went to the house of M. de Girardin, whose little girl was dying of diphtheria, and I got no thanks for my action, which passed entirely unnoticed. It was looked upon solely as an attempt to win over a political enemy. Yet it cost me a big effort."

work. We know what an active part she has taken in the reorganization of children's reformatories, in rescue work, and in the methods of charity institutions. To her is due the foundation of the 'Société des prêts de l'enfance au travail.' How many generous reforms she still pursues with marvelous perseverance! One still recognizes a little of the 'juene phalanstérienne' [1] in her. The welfare of women is one of her special objects; she aims at improving their condition and has obtained for Rosa Bonheur [2] the public recognition of a decoration.

"Twice, once during the war with Italy, and once when the Emperor visited Algiers, she has acted as Regent. We know what moderation, what political tact, and what sense of justice she then displayed.

"During her leisure hours the Empress engages in serious reading. No economic or financial question is beyond her, and it is charming to listen to her discussing these recondite problems with experts. Literature, history and art are common topics of conversation with her, and the Empress's tea-parties are one of the greatest delights of Compiègne. On these occasions she handles with equal ease the most homely subjects and the loftiest themes; the novelty of her outlook, the daring, almost the temerity, of her views, alike impress and enthral her listeners. Although her mode of expression is occasionally faulty, it is full of color and vivacity; she displays wonderful precision when she talks on business matters, and she rises to real heights of eloquence on those subjects which touch moral and political questions.

[1] This was the nickname given to the Empress by her friends in Madrid, when they saw her deep in the writings of Fourier, and heard her express the most advanced ideas on social and political questions.

[2] The well-known painter (Translator's Note).

"Religious without bigotry, learned without pedantry, she talks very freely on every topic. Perhaps she is a little too fond of argument. Possessing an impulsive temperament, she sometimes lets her tongue run away with her, and thereby she has more than once made enemies; but even her exaggerations spring from her wish to do good."

Why could not the Emperor have remained faithful to a woman so greatly admired and so much beloved? Why did he outrage her feelings for many years, not only by his sensual caprices, which knew no morrow, but by his more lasting liaisons with certain women who openly boasted that they not only swayed his senses but also owned his heart and influenced his mind? How can one reconcile these infidelities with the ever-increasing moral influence of the Empress? Many people have asked the same question.

One day the Empress asked herself this very question in my presence—put it to me, practically, in the course of the most soul-stirring interview I ever had with her.

This conversation took place rather late in the lives of both of us. It is easy to understand that she never cared to mention this subject to me when I was younger, and only exceptional circumstances now made her do so. Of course I had heard any amount of gossip about the scenes which took place in the Imperial ménage when the Empress was first made aware of her husband's unfaithfulness. But as I do not wish to alter my decision only to relate what the Empress actually said, and to set down my own personal recollections of her, I will not repeat any of these stories in which the false mixes with the true to such an extent that it is almost impossible to distinguish one from the other.

An Incident at Farnborough

Several years ago one of my friends wrote a book on the character, personality and habits of Napoleon III. This work possest all the qualities which make for success, as the writer had known the Emperor well during the last years of his life, while the Empress, who liked my friend both as a man and a writer, had assisted him in every possible way.

It was impossible for my friend to appear ignorant of his late sovereign's illicit amours, and he felt that he had to make some reference to them. Fearing to wound the Empress, however, he wished to make sure, before the publication of the book, that his words had not exceeded the limits of propriety, and he entrusted me with the excessively delicate mission of sounding her on the subject. I accepted somewhat rashly this thankless task, and from it originated the conversation which I am now about to record.

It took place at Farnborough, in the Empress's boudoir. She was sitting on a couch in front of one of the large windows which normally flood this room with light, but that day its blinds were lowered almost to the edge of the carpet.

The Empress seemed agitated, nervous, and, to be plain, somewhat shocked at my request, and I could not help feeling that she was right to resent it. She talked at first in a rather disconnected manner, breaking off in the middle of her sentences and leaving them unfinished, a sure sign that she was distrest. My friend had relied on the statements of a lady whom the Empress had once honored with her friendship, and who was supposed to have been the recipient of her heart-to-heart confidences.

"She knows nothing," said the Empress. "She has simply quoted from the newspapers of the time. I never

told her anything intimate." Then, looking at my friend's book, she ridiculed the idea that the Emperor, when well over fifty, could not have resisted the sensual temptations with which he was surrounded. "Nonsense—nonsense; nobody will ever believe such a thing!"

Her irritation first exhausted itself in bitterness. Then she passed into a kind of reverie, and bending her head, she seemed to be studying the flowers woven in the pattern of the carpet. She repeated sadly: "But—why?—why?"

Abruptly she turned towards me. "Do you understand why?"

My feelings at being asked such a question unexpectedly can well be imagined. I stammered something foolish about the animalism which exists in man and which sometimes exacts its toll even from higher natures.

The Empress shook her head. She had not seriously considered these passing sensualities; these were not the actions which had caused her the greatest mortification.

"No," she answered. "I think that when a man breaks away and seeks other women he is impelled by boredom and curiosity—boredom with that which is identified with his own personality, and curiosity to know a fresh mind or fresh moods. Listen! The Princess" (she always spoke of Princess Beatrice as "the Princess") "once told me something which was very true. 'My mother,' said the Princess, 'finds me less entertaining than my sisters. The reason is obvious: they bring her news and impressions from outside. But what can I do? All my ideas and impressions have been either derived from, or shared with, my mother.' Very well," said the Empress, "what holds good of mother and daughter must also hold good of husband and wife. It's the *same-*

ness, that fatal *sameness*[1]—in fact what we call monotony. One gets so used to acting and speaking and thinking together that at last neither interests the other. So . . . man roams!"

"But only for a time," I answered. "He eventually returns, brought back by sorrow or trials to the only one who has really understood him and loved him." I reminded the Empress of that article in the *Dix-Décembre*, of which I have given extracts; I reminded her of what she herself had told me: how Napoleon III carried one of her letters next to his heart as a talisman,[2] and I added, "The Emperor never for an instant ceased to love your Majesty."

And she answered, quite simply, "Yes, I believe that."

Our conversation closed on that, which was indeed her final word touching that great crisis of her life. But her love for the Emperor was destined to experience another short but terrible trial. One word explains it—Sedan—and the results of this second crisis will be seen later. The first blow temporarily separated husband and wife. The second reunited them—for ever, if I may use such a word of the few months of sorrow and humiliation which they lived together in the house of exile.

There has never been the slightest whisper of scandal concerning the Empress. Her constancy and wifely virtue were always above suspicion. Yet why should I

[1] The Empress actually used the English word (Translator's Note).

[2] In the autumn of 1873, a few months after the Emperor's death, the Empress showed me a yellow leather pocket-book which Napoleon III constantly carried about with him. This pocket-book contained, in addition to a letter from the Empress Eugénie, a letter of Napoleon I, in which he congratulated Queen Hortense on the birth of her son, the last letter written by Queen Hortense to her son, a lock of the Prince Imperial's hair when a baby, some written forms of prayer sent him by poor, unknown women, and a wad of bank-notes, from which he dispensed his daily charities.

disguise the fact that she entertained towards the men who worshiped her—and Heaven knows they were many—a very gentle feeling wherein curiosity, forgiveness and pity were mingled? And if any virtuous woman exists who can affirm that she has never given a single kind thought to the men who have loved her, let this rare example be the first to condemn the Empress.

The Empress's adorers were legion, and they were representative of all ranks, nationalities and characters. Lord Rosebery once told me a romantic story of a young English peer who loved Eugénie and wished to marry her. Mérimée, in an unpublished letter, mentioned the fate of a young Spaniard whom love for the Empress had well-nigh deprived of reason, and who wandered about the world, sick of everything and of himself most of all. It is an open secret that the unfortunate young Count Bacciochi killed himself in order to escape from the consuming tortures of his wild passion. The Prussian Minister, Count de Goltz, was another of her victims, and the Empress was aware of it and always referred to him as "my poor Goltz!" When a cruel disease threatened the Count's life, she insisted on his removal to the lodge of Henry IV, situated in the park at Fontainebleau, close to the palace, so that he might have better attendance and comfort. One summer's evening we were sitting by the lake in front of the Chinese Drawing-room, when a shadow—for it was more a shadow than a man—appeared in our midst. It was the Comte de Goltz. The Empress, greatly agitated, welcomed him with the utmost kindness. The poor man's tongue, indeed, failed him, but his eyes thanked her with the look of dumb devotion of a faithful dog.

Another foreign diplomat, the Count de Beust, who

was at first in the service of the King of Saxony, and who afterwards directed for some time the policy of Austria, was one of the last to add his name to the list of those hopeless worshipers. When he became Ambassador to England he used often to send her little flattering, allegorical poems such as Kaunitz might have written to his Marquise of Marquises, and one day the Empress showed me a mythological quatrain, and requested me to answer it on her behalf in the same language. But, let me confess it . . . my imagination would not rise to a single line!

Two men in the Empress's own entourage were also in love with her. One was a great gray-haired baby, boisterous and harmless, who would gaze at her for hours with eyes of dreamy and sentimental adoration. The other was a highly-strung eccentric creature who, in spite of his great name, always seemed more of an artist than an aristocrat—in fact he had won real recognition as a sculptor at the exhibitions. One evening, when he was lighting the Empress to her rooms, he suddenly lost his head and fell on his knees before her, candlestick in hand, in the attitude of one who sees a spirit from another world. A lady who witnessed the incident related it to me years afterwards at Chislehurst, in the presence of the Empress, who merely smiled. She had never harbored the least resentment against him on account of his foolish action.

My own teacher, Caro, the celebrated professor, takes his place in this army of martyrs. The Empress first met him at Compiègne and afterwards amused herself by indulging in a harmless flirtation with him at a masked ball. The mind of the philosopher was in consequence excessively disturbed, and he has left us, as a memorial of

his tender feelings, a pen-portrait of the Empress upon which he lavished his subtle knowledge of psychology and his consummate art as a writer. The portrait is charming as a portrait, but one fails to discover in it the real Eugénie.

I wonder if it is permissible for me to add the name of another Academician, Octave Feuillet, to this list? At present it seems the prevailing fashion to belittle the man and his works; the latter I am not here concerned to defend, but I am simply recalling Feuillet as his friends knew him, a sensitive being who detested vulgarity and who preserved in a sensual and cynical theatrical atmosphere, an unsullied virginity of soul which I am sure was peculiar to himself in that circle. In Feuillet's letters to his wife, written at Fontainebleau in 1868, I trace the deep and ardent sympathy which existed between the two most sincere idealists of their day; he saw and admired in the Empress his most exquisite dreams realized in a perfect and beautiful form.

Charles Edmond, formerly private secretary to Prince Jerome Napoleon, has revealed to the public the reason for the strange and persistent dislike which the Prince manifested towards the Empress for so many years. This dislike originated in a sentiment of a quite opposite kind, which had perforce to remain unexprest. A conversation I once had with the Prince has left no doubt in my mind on the matter: one could feel in every word the bitterness of unrequited love turned to resentment and hatred. Jerome Napoleon was the victim of his destiny. It was as if some wicked fairy who had not been invited to his christening had revenged herself by saying to him: "All the wonderful gifts which my sisters have bestowed on you are worthless because your life and your powers

will be spent in vainly desiring all the things that your cousin will possess."

One autumn evening at Saint Cloud, in 1867, Charles Duperré, then aide-de-camp in attendance, presented to the Prince Imperial a former officer of the Household who was desirous of bidding him farewell before leaving France on a distant mission, and during the course of the conversation I gathered that this gentleman had also just taken leave of the Empress.

Monsieur D. was a man of about forty; I was struck by his singularly piercing glance, his broad and intelligent forehead, with the hair brushed back, his clear-cut features, and his slightly passionate, imperious expression. He spoke but little, yet something compelling and unusual in the controlled utterance of his deep, rather hollow voice, combined with the complete immobility of his demeanor, gave me the impression of some tragic suffering hidden away under the outward commonplaces of ordinary intercourse.

"Who is this man?" I asked Commander Duperré when the door had closed on the visitor.

"He is an unfortunate man who is madly in love with the Empress and who is being sent away to die at the other end of the world!"

This tragic forecast was, alas! realized. When the news came, the Empress went at once to see his mother, who lived in one of the towns on the banks of the Loire. The two women mingled their tears together, and the Empress never forgot the man who paid so dearly for the crime of having adored her.

The Empress was also worshiped by unknown lovers, many of humble condition, many even who were open enemies of the Empire. From time to time these unknown

lovers have betrayed the existence of their hopeless passion, and after the revolution of September 4 I remember reading in a Belgian newspaper a feuilleton in which the Empress figured in the most impossible intrigue. The author described her in such glowing colors as to leave no doubt about his own feelings. The writer was no other than a former leading Communist and, so report says, a veritable Caliban.

À propos of these unknown adorers, I remember that during the period when I was a student of the École Normale I occasionally met a very curious young man on Thursdays and Sundays at the Café du Droit, then situated at the corner of the Rue Soufflot and the Rue Saint Jacques. I believe that this odd youth was a member of some secret societies which conspired against the life of Napoleon III, but notwithstanding his hatred of the dynasty, he was madly in love with the Empress!

One evening in 1867, at Saint Cloud, I happened for some forgotten reason to mention this incident in the presence of the Empress, who at once thought that she identified my conspirator as the same person who had once tried to force his way through the gate opposite the Solferino Bridge in an endeavor to speak to her as she walked on the terrace facing the river. The man was arrested, and an ardent love letter to the Empress was found in his possession.

I had been foolish enough to describe the youth of the café as "one of my friends" . . . a fatal mistake, as the Empress instantly overwhelmed me with questions concerning him, and I had not sufficient moral courage to admit that I hardly knew him! So I had to . . . let us say . . . romance; and I was already deeply immersed in the waters of invention when the hour for the Prince's

bedtime arrived. I rose at once, greatly relieved at this chance of escape; but the Empress turned to me. "Now be sure to come back; I want to hear *everything*," she cried.

When I returned most unwillingly at the end of a quarter of an hour, I found the Empress waiting for me alone in the first drawing-room. She at once settled me comfortably in an armchair in the evident expectation of a long and interesting story.

So I had to tell my tale, and the Empress listened to me spellbound. When I occasionally paused in sheer perplexity I could hear the subdued hum of voices in the adjoining room and the murmur of the fountain as it fell in diamond drops into the great horse-shoe basin immediately underneath the windows.

But the Empress gave me no rest. No sooner did I pause than she exclaimed, "Well? . . . what happened then? What else did he say to you?" And I had to continue my fairy-tale, which I now regard as my best attempt at fiction—at any rate, as the one which appealed most successfully to its public!

From time to time various members of the entourage, in whose faces surprize and disappointment struggled to displace the smiling mask of the courtier, appeared for an instant on the threshold of the little drawing-room, and then vanished. Heaven only knows at what hour tea would have been served that evening had I not, punctually at eleven, closed my hero's career on a deathbed in the Lariboisière Hospital, and prevented any possibility of his resurrection by describing how I stood by his grave in the pauper's portion of the cemetery at Montparnasse "on a dreary winter's afternoon when the snow fell in soft white flakes on the coffin."

The Empress had become strangely silent, and she bent her head as if she were stooping over the nameless grave. "Poor fellow!" she murmured, rising with a sigh. During the remainder of the evening the recital of this unhappy love affair cast a shadow of mournful melancholy over her beautiful face, for which my conscience smote me hard. Even at the present day I feel a certain confusion and almost remorse when I think of my deception, and it affords me some relief to have confessed it.

CHAPTER III

THE EMPRESS AT HOME—BIARRITZ, FONTAINEBLEAU, COMPIÉGNE AND SAINT CLOUD

I SHOULD have an endless task before me were I to attempt to revive the life of a bygone epoch and repeople the palaces of the Second Empire with those men and women whom I once knew as constant visitors within their gates. By far the greater number of these have now passed away; of the five Imperial residences three have been destroyed by fire; two alone remain and, save on rare occasions, are no more than shrines of memories open to foreign pilgrims who visit France.

The life I remember has gone from them for ever, and that vivid "lived in" feeling which endows a residence with the personalities of its occupants is entirely absent from them to-day. To recall this vanished life would doubtless be a useful and interesting task, but it is not mine to-day. My object is to show the Empress Eugénie in her home life at Biarritz, Fontainebleau, Compiègne, Saint Cloud and at the Tuileries, because she appeared to me, and was indeed, a different woman in different settings.

She changed her mode of life with her surroundings: her thoughts and her feelings took on a different color. Thus to each house she brought a new attitude of mind and a fresh mood. I might even go so far as to say that her age was not the same at Biarritz and at Compiègne, and again not the same at Compiègne and at the Tuileries. I think she was always most free and natural at Biarritz,

more the Eugénie of the days of her youth. This is easily explained, as at Biarritz everything reminded her of her native land: climate, customs, even language, for at the Villa Eugénie, as well as on the sea front, one heard Spanish frequently spoken. The people themselves were good-hearted, loyal folk, and strangers were invariably respectful and sympathetic.

This happy state of things allowed the Empress very great freedom in her movements; she used to stroll down the street carrying her tall walking-stick with its yellow silk tassels, holding her skirts well out of the dust, walking into shops, dropping in to see her friends, interesting herself in the everyday life of the town, watching the erection of the new buildings, and taking an active interest in the progress of the jetty.

Politics were completely banished from Biarritz, as the Emperor was supposed to be holiday-making. The Chief Secretary was absent, and M. Franceschini Pietri, the private secretary, undertook any official work that was absolutely necessary. There were no Ministerial meetings as at Saint Cloud, Fontainebleau and Compiègne. One Minister was in attendance (following the English custom), but he seemed to be staying at Biarritz more for pleasure than business, and his presence was intermittent. A state official came and went with urgent dispatches which required the Emperor's signature.

Nobody thought of dressing for dinner, and the well-known telegram to Mérimée, "Come without knee-breeches," might have been sent equally well to any one of the other guests. These guests were usually either personal friends of the sovereigns or persons of distinction passing through Biarritz to whom a special interview had been granted. So that such political affairs as were

actually dealt with were handled outside the routine of offices and ministries. There was no recognized *rota*, as in those residences nearer Paris. Our existence at Biarritz was a combination of the life in an ideal country-house and that in a big seaside hotel. There was any amount of movement and freedom, and we were always doing something fresh: sometimes a party of us drove in wagonettes or rode on horseback into the country, or went for a boating trip. We made excursions to the mouth of the Adour, to Bayonne, Cambo, Saint Jean de Luz, Sarre, and even into Spain, picnicking en route.

In the evening we chatted or played a kind of game of "consequences," and it was amusing to find that the lights of literature were not nearly so brilliant in this mode of expression as were the butterflies of our own world. The Empress always kept the most witty of the questions and answers, so it is easy to guess that we all endeavored to excel. We also indulged in a lottery, where chance showed itself so discriminating that I have always suspected it was guided by a very kind and generous hand.

Added to its semi-Spanish atmosphere, and the almost complete absence of politics, Biarritz possest other attractions which endeared it to the Empress. As those in attendance remained there during the whole of the five or six weeks that the Court was at Biarritz, the usual rotation was suspended and the Empress selected her entourage with the very greatest care. She therefore chose only those people whom she knew and liked personally, and she banished the fault-finders, wet-blankets, and sticklers for etiquet, all those who refused to be merry themselves and interfered with the amusements of others.

Biarritz was the only seaside residence of the Empress,

who loved the sea and everything and everybody connected with it. One day she described herself as "the mother of all sailors," and afterwards a few familiar and privileged spirits used playfully to address her as "Mama." A small cruiser, anchored in Bayonne roadstead, was always at the disposal of the sovereigns, and every morning we received a telegram to say if the weather or the state of the bar favored a sea trip. Except her mountain walks in the Pyrenees, which brought back memories of her youthful days, the Empress liked nothing better than a day at sea on board the *Chamois*, but in September, 1867, one of these sea trips nearly met with a fatal termination. The Empress, her son and the suite had intended to land at Saint Jean de Luz, but the ship's boats missed the entrance to the harbor, and the boat which contained the Empress and the Prince was nearly dashed to pieces on the rocks. Both mother and son were perfectly undisturbed by this terrifying experience, and the Empress actually returned to Biarritz in the highest spirits. But I rather think the Emperor had something to say to her on the subject, as he had experienced two hours of heartrending anxiety on her account.

With the exception of some incognito journeys, about which I have nothing to say as I never accompanied the Empress on such occasions, I think that Biarritz was the place where she was most truly herself, simply because there she could, as far as was possible to a French sovereign, do as she pleased, say what she thought, and see whom she liked.

At Fontainebleau and Compiègne the exigencies of State demanded another rôle. Here she was the Empress who dispensed a dazzling Imperial hospitality and at the same time fascinated and charmed everybody. During

Photo: Imprimerie Crete

THE PALACE OF FONTAINEBLEAU

my stay at Fontainebleau in the summer of 1868 there were no fêtes and no receptions, so I knew only from hearsay about the great days of Fontainebleau: for instance, the visit of the Siamese Mission, painted by Gérôme, the Court of Love presided over by the beautiful Madame Przedjecka, when Mérimée acted as secretary, the gaieties of the "Babies' Club," where the youngest and liveliest members of the Court gathered round Princess Anna Murat, in all the glory of her twenty summers. But in my day the Court comprised only children and middle-aged folk—no young men or women—and the life of the place was a good deal affected by this. We were about twenty in all, rather lost in the immense building, of which we occupied only a very small part.

The only spots which showed signs of life were in front of the Chinese Drawing-room and along the avenue of tall trees bordering the small lake. We used to collect there after lunch, and those amongst us who were faithful to the traditions of Fontainebleau provided themselves with pieces of bread with which to feed those hateful carp who, in size and fierceness, exceeded the murenas in the tanks of ancient Rome. To the shore of the lake were moored all kinds of boats—dingies, yawls, canoes, "Rob Roys," and even a gondola which had been abandoned by its homesick gondolier, and which none of us knew how to handle. In the long straight avenue the Prince Imperial took his first lessons in bicycle riding, and the Empress's hammock was slung between two of the trees. One day, when she was lying in this hammock, an over zealous aide-de-camp (it was not his first blunder) noticed an old Japanese parasol which was lying long forgotten at the foot of a tree and which had become, by the accumulation of years, the receptacle of a varied collection of living

and dead insects. Advancing towards the Empress with the movements of a slave of the harem fanning a Sultana, the officer opened the parasol, and a perfect deluge of grubs and caterpillars rained upon the Empress, who uttered a shriek of terror and sprang out of the hammock like lightning.

During the midday heat the Empress liked to sit with her ladies-in-waiting in the Chinese Drawing-room as the close proximity of the lake and the dim light made the room comparatively cool. The two rooms which had been thrown into one to make the Chinese Drawing-room were immediately under the papal apartments at the corner of the Louis XV wing of the palace and the Fountain Court. The Empress had furnished the Chinese Drawing-room with the many treasures taken from the Summer Palace at Peking. These she had disposed with consummate skill, for she had a gift of her own for making harmony out of hangings and carpets and for the pleasing arrangement of furniture and works of art. I believe she has greatly helped to inaugurate the fashion of the knick-knack and has taught us to fill up the center of a room and to trace in it winding lanes, while reserving here and there secluded nooks, each independent of the others and with an individuality of its own. Anyone but Eugénie would have made a kind of museum of the room, but she made it, as it were, a corner of the abode of "The Son of Heaven."

Seated in the midst of these spoils from far Cathay, the ladies worked or pretended to, while someone read aloud; I read several of the "Nouvelles Genevoises" to them in the Chinese Drawing-room.

When the Emperor happened to be in camp at Châlons, or taking the waters, a quaint form of corre-

spondence was exchanged between him and the Court. The Plombières "trout" wrote to the carp at Fontainebleau, who replied in the same light-hearted vein, and this correspondence often occupied our afternoons in the Chinese Drawing-room. At four o'clock the Imperial wagonettes drew up in the Fountain Court with their picturesque postilions, who were a delight to the eye as each stood, whip in hand, in the traditional livery of high riding-boots, yellow breeches and glazed hats, not forgetting their peruques, from which the powder fell in little clouds on their green and gold jackets.

Those drives in the woods, to the tuneful jingling of the bells answering rhythmically to the rapid trot of the horses, were an exhilarating experience. We passed through silent stretches of tall forest; sometimes we awakened villages sleeping in the sun and watched the women rush to the doors of their cottages and heard the shrill voices of children crying "Long live the Empress!" as we passed swiftly over the cobbled streets. Sometimes we halted for tea and a ramble among the rocks. I remember an excursion to the "Sables d'Arbonne," where about fifteen of us, hand in hand, rushed headlong down a very steep slope. We slipt, we fell, and finally we lost our footing and came down like a hurricane, the girls screaming in mingled terror and enjoyment. When we finally arrived at the bottom of the hill it was evident that several pieces of the ladies' skirts and many of their high heels had been torn off in their downward course. What a fine text for the "unco guid" who were always railing against what they termed "the follies of the Empress!" On my own part I was no more scandalized by this innocent gaiety than I was in later years when I saw the Jesuit Fathers playing football and cricket with

their pupils. The Empress at the age of forty had kept the gift of enjoying herself with children as a child. I always associated this gift in my mind with simplicity and strength of soul, and I had not the slightest sympathy with the censorious who affected to believe the end of the world had come if, in such games, one might have caught an occasional glimpse of the Empress's ankles.

After dinner we went out again, and occasionally the Empress would ask one of us to row her two or three times round the lake. When darkness fell we returned to the Chinese Drawing-room, where there chanced to be a mechanical piano; ever since its discovery we had made the most of it, and the girls danced merrily together to the strains of the then popular "Blue Danube" and "Rose" waltzes.

At half past nine tea was served in a neighboring room, and conversation lasted till a late hour, especially when Mérimée or Feuillet happened to be sitting next to the Empress.

One evening, as no "lions" were present, we retired earlier than was our wont, and hardly had we left the drawing-room than an enormous cut-glass chandelier, suspended from the ceiling, fell with a tremendous crash exactly in the place where the Empress usually sat every evening. This was one of the first of a series of inexplicable accidents which followed in quick succession, and to which the superstitious attached the significance of omens. In 1869 the warden of Fontainbleau died suddenly of meningitis, and the Republican newspapers attributed his death to the fact that he had stood bareheaded under a burning sun when taking the orders of the Empress. He was described as being a "victim" of the pitiless etiquet insisted upon by the "Spaniard."

This was absolutely untrue; but how much more untrue was the prevalent idea which so many people had formed of the Empress! The real truth is that she set no value on etiquet, and so often disregarded it that the Emperor had constantly to recall her to a sense of the formalities befitting her exalted rank.

It was at Compiègne that the Empress had to display the greatest skill in discharging her difficult and complex duties as hostess. In the first place the lists of invitations had to be drawn up and the "sets" made out so as to contain a fairly equal proportion of aristocrats, cosmopolitan notorieties, diplomats, artists, men of learning, pretty women and members of the Institute. These various ingredients had to be cleverly balanced so as to form a homogeneous mixture; enmities and misunderstandings had to be taken account of: yet withal variety and contrast must be obtained whilst avoiding heart-burnings, or friction. To achieve this required a knowledge of every person's character and past history.

The Empress was assisted, it is true, in her selection of her guests, but this assistance was only an added danger, and she soon found that it was necessary to mistrust the social sponsors who were ever ready to put forward the claims of some "charming American" or some "wonderful artiste." Further, whenever an invitation was sent to someone outside the ordinary Court circle it was necessary to make sure that there would be no affronting refusal or that the acceptance would not result in some breach of etiquet which would scandalize the doctors of decorum and disturb the harmony created with so much pains.

Once the lists were checked and the invitations issued care had to be bestowed on the assignment of rooms, for

the apartments had to be proportioned to the rank and importance of the guests. Therefore, if the Maréchale X had been given a special boudoir where she could receive her chosen friends, it was impossible to refuse the Princess Y a similar privilege.

Then came the task of preparing the program for the nine or ten days allotted to each set; of keeping this collection of varied personalities amused from nine in the morning until midnight; of controlling them under the appearance of perfect freedom; of flattering their vanity with a word, twenty times a day, and keeping their interest awake; of making each one of the bigwigs believe he was *the* great man of the set, and preventing the shy ones from congregating in corners and forming cliques—in a word, of making a *salon*, that is, a social unit, out of as incongruous an assemblage of human beings as the chances of a journey will bring together in a restaurant car. Such was the task to which the Empress applied herself, and the surviving guests of Compiègne, of whom there are still many, God be thanked, will, I feel sure, gladly bear witness to her triumphant success in social diplomacy.

I will not go so far as to say that the Empress never made a mistake, or complimented the wrong person, or blundered when she was driven to guesswork through lack of time in which to study her part.

I have already related in the *Journal des Débats*, *à propos* of my personal recollections of the visit of the Tsar and Tsarina to Compiègne,[1] an entertaining little slip of hers—for which I was partly responsible.

M. Egger, one of the professors at the Sorbonne, had handed to the Empress a roll of manuscript, sealed up,

[1] *Journal des Débats*, September 7, 1901.

which he had begged her to open and read, as he felt sure that it would interest her.

The Empress, who did not know much about M. Egger beyond the fact that he was a very learned man, asked me to enlighten her as to his especial subject, and I therefore naturally waxed enthusiastic over the genius of the eminent Greek scholar whose lectures I had attended at the Sorbonne. "Ah!" said the Empress. "Then M. Egger confines his work exclusively to ancient Greece?"

"That is so," I replied.

A few days after our conversation M. Egger happened to meet the Empress. "Dare I venture to ask the opinion of your Majesty about the manuscript which I submitted for your Majesty's consideration?" said he.

"Oh! yes . . . yes," answered the Empress. . . . "I found it most interesting. . . . These memories of Greece are full of charm."

"But, madame . . ." exclaimed the mystified professor ". . . the manuscript contained an account of various unpublished documents relating to Marie Antoinette!"

The Empress looked at M. Egger, then she laughed. "Forgive me," she cried, "I'll confess I have *not* yet had a chance to open the roll. . . . Shall we look through it together?"

A few such slight mishaps, good humoredly recognized and gracefully repaired, could in no way affect the prestige of the Imperial hostess.

She relied chiefly on the afternoon teas in her attempts to blend together the various elements which composed each "set." I will endeavor to picture two of these teas, one of the third set in 1868 to which my father was invited, and which he described in a letter to my

mother the same evening, and another which I find described in my own notes.

"After lunch," wrote my father, "Mademoiselle de Larminat, one of the maids of honor, invited me on behalf of the Empress to take tea with her at five o'clock. I was a little early, and was somewhat startled, when I entered, to find myself almost alone with the Empress. The only other guest present was a young naval commander named Garnier, just home from the Far East, who had brought a number of drawings of Buddhist monuments. The Empress asked me to sit down and look at the drawings. But the room soon began to fill—I think about twenty persons had been invited—the ladies chatted among themselves, or with the ladies-in-waiting, whilst the maids of honor dispensed tea. The Empress, who was seated on a sofa, made the men sit round her: she placed Lachaud on her right, Baroche on her left; the others present were Alphand, Viollet le Duc, Prince Bibesco, an "avocat-général" M. Savary, and two or three more whose names I forget. The conversation over which the Empress presided first turned on famous orators past and present. Baroche and Lachaud naturally led the discussion; the Empress declared that she personally preferred men of deeds to men of words; and poor Cicero, who was not there to plead his own cause, but who found an advocate in Boissier, was the butt of several caustic remarks. The mention of women who possess the gift of oratory permitted me to say something about Madame Deraisme, whom I had heard speaking at the Boulevard des Capucines. At last we touched on the question of divorce, which Lachaud advocated, although he admitted that religious sentiment was a serious obstacle. The Empress closed the discussion by saying: 'We shall not reestablish divorce in

France.' She then rose and made a sign for us to withdraw, and we hurried away to dress for an early dinner, as there was to be a theatrical performance afterwards."

Later I wrote down my own impressions: "Invited to tea with the Empress. It was a lawyers' tea, and we discust celebrated trials. Madame Lafarge was our first 'subject,' and we made desperate efforts to induce Lachaud, who was sitting next the Empress, to break the silence of years and say whether he still believed in the innocence of Madame Lafarge. It was evident that most of the guests like myself had heard of Lachaud's infatuation for his beautiful client, but we could get nothing from him. I turned to him, remarking, 'Well, Lachaud, your clients have certainly taught you one lesson.'

"'And what is that?'

"'Never to confess,' I answered.

"He laughed, but remained as impenetrable as ever.

"The conversation then turned on the murder of the Duchesse de Praslin by her husband. The Empress told us that she used to meet the Duke and his wife at the Delesserts. 'I met the Duchesse at dinner a few days before the murder,' she said. 'And the Duchesse told us that one night she had seen the figure of a hooded monk standing in the middle of her room. She had pulled the bell cord violently, and the monk had disappeared. Was it a nightmare or was it the Duke?' asked the Empress.

"'It must have been the Duke,' replied a dramatic author. 'He was having a dress rehearsal.'

"'Yes, I think you are right,' answered the Empress, 'because on the night of the murder all the wires of the bells had been cut.'"

In the midst of this continual keeping up of appearances and somewhat artificial merriment, the Empress

had moments of profound weariness. "People will have it," she said to me one day, "that kings are surrounded by flatterers; but, alas! it is kings themselves who are obliged to play the flatterers' part to all the world. Their whole life is one long bowing and thanking. Monarchs are not even allowed the right to criticize. They dare not stigmatize as execrable the book which is dedicated to them, the play which is performed in their presence, or the music with which their ears are tortured. A queen often skims through the pages of some learned work, as a schoolboy studies his lesson, whilst her hair is being drest for dinner, simply because it behoves her to be gracious to the author. At Court all the young girls are pretty, all the gowns are exquisite, every artist is a genius. It is the fate of princes to be forced to admire everything and everybody."

The Empress was speaking in the quiet room where the Prince Imperial usually worked. The Prince's governor, General Frossard, did not often allow his charge to take part in the gay doings at Compiègne, and when for some reason or other the Prince was not allowed to dine at the Imperial table, the evening used to pass somewhat as follows:

Toward seven o'clock all was quiet in the gloomy study, illuminated by a single lamp with a broad shade, by the light of which the Prince and his friend, Conneau, were struggling with a sentence of Sallust's or a problem in arithmetic. The silence was unbroken save by the loud regular ticking of a great clock more than a hundred years old and the voice of the wind as it howled afar in the forest. Suddenly a door opened. We heard the rustle of silk and satin, the soft jingle of swinging bracelets and chains. It was the Empress!

When her maids had put the last touches to her gorgeous dinner toilet in that wonderful dressing-room, sacred in bygone years to Marie Antoinette and Marie Louise, she used to come to say good night to her son before joining the Emperor.

As she came up to the table her figure lit up the shadows. "Oh! Mama, is it you?" exclaimed the Prince.

"Are you hard at work? If so, don't let me disturb you," she answered. And she would kiss him tenderly and playfully tap Louis Conneau on the shoulder. Then she would walk to the window and stand in the bay for a few moments, talking in undertones. Sometimes she prest her forehead against the pane, gazing into the depth and mystery of the dark night with eyes full of dreams as if she sought therein refreshment for sight and brain. One evening she said to me: "What a pity General Frossard cannot forbid me, as well as my son, to attend this dinner!" I can still smell the faint perfume which enveloped her like the sighs of flowers. It was like a vision, and lasted but five minutes, yet the splendors of Compiègne seem pale and dull in comparison.

I think I can best describe Saint Cloud as a place of contrasts. Sometimes it was more full of life than the Tuileries, and sometimes it was more still than Fontainbleau or Compèigne in their days of deserted silence, when either Court or guests were away. Here sweet peaceful days alternated with the pomp of levees and receptions, but Saint Cloud was not far enough off from Paris to prevent the almost daily intrusion of politics into the life of the Sovereigns. Paris was always present in our eyes and in our minds, and the great frowning city seemed like a silent enemy. Twice a week we saw a long pro-

cession of Ministerial carriages drive slowly up the avenue, and we knew instinctively that each carriage contained a load of fresh worries. After the council was over the Ministers lunched with the Emperor; some were gruff and sullen, others put on a mien of affected jollity. Their faces, heated or pale with fatigue, showed obvious traces of stormy discussions that often came near to degenerating into disputes.

In the evenings the Emperor occasionally received members of the Chamber. Such evenings, one need hardly say, were not merry ones, for there was in the air the shadow of coming disaster, and all felt obscurely that evil days were at hand.

But there were other days, very different, when Saint Cloud seemed to forget the existence of Paris and turned her back on the capitol to seek refuge in the peaceful solitudes of her vast park. Then it became once more the country residence of kings, the house of peace, of memories, of dreams. I have seen the girls of the St. Denis School playing, chattering and singing roundelays on the very spot where, a few months before, the unfortunate Empress Charlotte had lost her reason. Thus two entirely opposite tendencies entered into the life of the Empress at Saint Cloud. The outward pleasures she shared with those around her: the deep-seated worries could only be guessed from a few words which escaped her now and then.

Of a morning I often saw the Empress driving herself in a pretty little basket carriage, respectfully installed in her seat by Gamble, the Englishman who ruled supreme in the stables.

I do not know whether she was a skilful whip, or what opinion an expert would have passed on her driving, but

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to me she seemed wholly charming and dignified as, perched on her tall seat, she gave their head to the ponies, who shook their tasseled trappings and raised a cloud of dust as they moved off.

In the afternoon we would drive in chars-à-bancs to the woods of Ville d'Avray, of Hubies, of Fausses-Reposes, to the model farm at Jardies, to the pond at Saint Cucufa, or to the pavilion of La Jonchère, or again to the Marly Aqueduct and the Malmaison. A drive to the last named was the final outing of 1870.

After dinner we usually sat in the middle drawing-room on the first floor, or else in the billiard-room next to it, and some of us repaired to the library immediately behind the drawing-room where we could talk undisturbed. The library, a curious room designed by King Louis Philippe, resembled the frame of a staircase absolutely devoid of stairs, the positions of the various floors being shown by narrow galleries one over the other, the whole lighted by a glass roof. These galleries, from top to bottom, were lined with books, and contained many rare and valuable volumes. Jules Sandeau acted nominally as librarian, and when the Court was at Saint Cloud he was always at his post in the library on Sundays, when their Majesties passed on their way to chapel, and was greeted by them with a smiling "good morning;" but Sandeau never troubled to intrude himself further on their notice.

The large round table, at which the ladies sat pretending to occupy themselves with fancy work, was placed in one corner of the drawing-room between the mantelpiece and the library door. The Empress used to sit immediately under a marble bust of Napoleon II which was as unlike the Duc de Reichstadt we have seen on the

stage as it is possible to imagine. It was at this table that Mérimée read "Lokis," his last imaginative work, aloud to us, and our favorable verdict determined him to publish it. I have already related this incident in "Mèrimèe and His Friends." Those of my readers who are desirous of learning the details will there find them fully described.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPRESS AT HOME (continued)—LIFE AT THE TUILERIES (1867–70)—THE EMPRESS AND POLITICS

IF at certain times life at Saint Cloud was saddened by the intrusion of politics, it is not too much to affirm that we were never free from them at the Tuileries, where they enveloped us in one unbroken gloom made dense with unhappy memories and still more sinister forebodings.

At the Tuileries, indeed, the Empress appears to me as a great and noble figure, for there I have seen her devote herself, body and soul, to the terrible task of sovereignty and live again, with full consciousness of the perilous and tragic similarity, the successive phases of that other royal agony which the same surroundings had once witnessed.

And to begin with it is important to have a clear vision of these surroundings, for not only are they the natural frame of the portrait I am endeavoring to sketch, but they reflect the personality of her who lived so long among them and who had, to a certain extent, stamped them with the impress of her own moral individuality. It is under this, their last aspect, that the Tuileries will go down to history. I make therefore no apology for describing them in detail.

The private apartments of the Empress consisted of eight rooms out of the eleven on the first floor of the wing of the palace situated between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore. I am now only referring to those rooms of which the windows looked out upon the

garden; those which overlooked the Cour du Carrousel were used for another purpose which I shall presently explain.

When a visitor wished to reach the Empress's rooms by the great hall which opened on to the arch of the Horloge, it was necessary, after mounting the staircase, to cross the anteroom in which the ushers were on duty, and thence to pass through the room used by those in attendance to the drawing-room especially reserved for ladies. In this room, if my memory serves me aright, framed in the wood-work, were the portraits of the prettiest women of the Second Empire. They were popularly supposed to be the "friends" of the Empress, although, when I first came to the Tuileries, a number of these so-called "friends" had either discontinued their visits or were very coldly received. The study came next and was crowded with furniture and lined with glass cases full of treasures. Close to the second window was the Empress's special corner where she wrote her letters. Her writing-table was encircled by a crystal screen over which graceful climbing plants hung in festoons of verdure, giving her the appearance of being in some nook of tropical forest. The table, which was rather small, was surrounded with miniatures and photographs, and the Empress could never write a line without feeling herself in the presence and under the observation of her beloved living and her equally beloved dead. Behind her writing-table was a glass-fronted cupboard. This she opened one day and showed me some beautifully bound books in which she had copied extracts in prose or poetry from her favorite authors. The names which recurred most frequently were those of Bossuet, Chateaubriand, Lamartine. de Maistre, Victor Cousin, Donoso Cortez, and, generally speaking,

all those who have bequeathed us great thoughts on great subjects.

She was but little moved by that power which lies in the continuity of argument, in the classification of facts, or in the logical march of thought towards a rigorous conclusion. Her sympathies were rather with the "seers," with the intuitive minds, those that find the truth by instinct and flash upon it an illuminating word, with that convincing common sense that needs no proofs. I doubt if she often read a book through from cover to cover. She would come across, in the opening pages, some phrase which stopt her and set her thinking. I remember her exclamations of surprize when I once told her that the best book would be that from which it would be impossible to make sense of a single line once it was separated from the text to which it belonged.

Between the study and the library was the starting-point of a little winding staircase which communicated with the Emperor's rooms. These were situated on the ground floor of the palace underneath those of the Empress, but separated from them by the entresol, which was allotted to the use of Gabriel Thélin, a former *valet de chambre* who had become the treasurer of the privy purse.

The rooms occupied by the Emperor were merely little overheated gilt boxes furnished in the style of the First Empire. The Emperor, who took after the Creole side of his family, liked these small rooms and insisted on maintaining therein an excessively high temperature. He was also very fond of bed, and would often seek it when he wanted to think things over. The Empress rarely visited this hot-house; whenever she wanted to speak to the Emperor she struck a gong which was placed at the

head of the little staircase, and if Napoleon III were at liberty he instantly obeyed her summons.

The Empress's books were arranged in handsome glass-fronted bookcases, and all the volumes were bound in dark morocco stamped with an "E" surmounted by the Imperial Crown. The selection of these books showed an almost encyclopedic method of thought dominated by those idealistic predilections to which I have referred. But the works of historians were given the place of honor in this charming library, which after the Fourth of September the Emperor tried to reconstruct elsewhere.

The large embrasure of the window formed a sort of winter garden, and it was here that I installed Fustel de Coulanges one spring day in 1869, when he came to give us a series of interesting talks on the growth of primitive civilizations, and above all on the civilization of ancient Egypt, of which the Empress was soon to see the surviving relics for herself. These little lectures made an interesting and charming picture. Imagine the five or six ladies grouped around the Empress, some sewing, others intently watching the speaker. Occasionally a whisper, a smile, some artless question! And the author of "The Ancient City," speaking in a level, slow, slightly affected voice, at first stiff and nervous, in his tight black coat and in his novel rôle, but gradually thawing under the sympathy and interest which welcomed him and were maintained to the end.

From the library one passed into a kind of anteroom, which seemed rather bare and insignificant until two large swing-doors opened opposite the window and disclosed an altar in the recess behind. This room was the Empress's oratory; there the Prince Imperial performed the devotions of his religious "retreat" before his First Com-

munion, and listened to the final instructions given him by the Abbé Deguerry, curé of the Madeleine. It was also in this little oratory that the Empress heard Mass for the last time on the morning of the Fourth of September.

An enormous dressing-room, large enough for a Council of State, and a smaller but nevertheless large bedroom completed the suite of rooms reserved for the Empress.

How did the Empress spend her mornings? I confess I am in almost complete ignorance on this point. I am left with three suppositions: business, dress, charity. *À propos* of the last I find an undated entry in my diary. "This morning I met a carriage entering the courtyard of the Tuileries. The men wore gray liveries. Inside sat an old lady with spectacles, a large hat and a thick veil. With her was Mademoiselle Marion and the two nieces of her Majesty, the Duchesse de Galisteo, and the Duchesse de Montoro. They all began to laugh when they saw my startled look, and suddenly the old lady took off her spectacles and raised her veil. . . . It was like the fairy-tale of Cinderalla; a transformation happened under one's very eyes. . . . The old lady was none other than the Empress! It seems that she often disguises herself when she visits the poor in the lowest parts of Paris. We spoke about our meeting that evening, and the Empress said she thought the Prince ought to see for himself what poverty was really like. 'He does not know what it is,' she declared. 'He probably thinks that the poor are those who don't possess carriages. It is absolutely necessary that he should understand and realize, that he should listen to the tales of these poor wretches; much in them is lies, no doubt, and yet even more is truth. He must see for himself those dreadful homes, without air or bread, where

happiness is impossible. He is not fit to reign until he has seen that!' I told the Empress I would mention her wish to General Frossard, but I can see him already in my imagination. He will throw up his hands to Heaven in sheer despair and go out slamming the door behind him!"

The Empress lunched alone with the Emperor. The Prince, who sometimes made a third, has often told me about these luncheons, which were far simpler than those of the officers on palace duty. After lunch the Empress gave audiences, and it is a characteristic fact that we had always to warn the Empress when it was time for her to bid adieu to those honored by an audience. She had no notion whatever of the flow of time, and she once told us about her first visit to Princess Marie of Baden, Duchess of Hamilton, after her marriage. "I believe I stopt there for five or six hours," she said: "I had nothing left to say, and yet I didn't go. I believe I should have remained there to this day if the Emperor had not become uneasy and sent Bacciochi to fetch me."

The Empress could never accustom herself to limit an interview in proportion to the person's rank, the degree of intimacy, or the object of the visit. Many a time at Chislehurst it has been my duty to appear and cut short on any pretext some interview of which the Empress could not have told whether it had lasted two hours or ten minutes.

At four o'clock the Empress invariably drove out, excepting those days when she went skating. But the monotonous four o'clock drive, which by this time she thought very dull, became on occasions strangely dramatic. I remember one memorable day in 1869, when the Imperial carriage, instead of taking the usual route to the Bois de Boulogne, drove without any escort, preceded by

a single outrider, towards the habitual center of the troubles which were then agitating Paris. When, after having passed down the Rue de Rivoli and the Boulevard de Sébastopol, the Sovereigns reached the great Boulevards, they found the crowd was so dense that the landau had to proceed at a snail's pace and at times to stop altogether. The crowd of onlookers, mostly hostile to the Empire and which very likely had hooted the police only five minutes previously, was suddenly seized with enthusiasm and burst into frenzied cheers. It was a great popular ovation—but, alas! it was the last!

That evening, when I ventured to tell the Empress how greatly I admired her courage, she replied, "Don't you know I am an awful coward?"

I told her that I refused to believe it, and instanced her visit to the cholera patients at Amiens and her behavior on January 14, 1858, when she had said to those who were fussing round her: "Look after the wounded and do not trouble about us. . . . This is part of our day's work!"

But she repeated, shaking her head: "Indeed I assure you that, by nature, I am really a coward."

At seven o'clock we all assembled in what was known as the Private Drawing-Room which looked on the Place du Carrousel and was separated from the Salle des Maréchaux by the room called the First Consul's Room. The drawing-room was very spacious; on one side of it stood a grand piano, on the other near the mantelpiece was a four-cornered table, in the center a circular couch. The furniture was covered with old discolored red damask, quite out of fashion, and the material was so frayed on the arms of the chairs that the lining was visible. These pieces of furniture disappeared eventually to return, one

by one, re-covered with a special make of black satin brocaded in silk flowers, an order doubtless intended as an encouragement to the silk-weaving industries of Lyons, then already in a very precarious condition. We often had to wait an interminable time, without knowing the cause of the delay, for the moment when the doors of the Empress's drawing-room were flung wide apart and the usher announced "The Emperor." The Sovereigns then entered, accompanied by the Prince. If guests were present the gentlemen lined up on one side and the ladies on the other, and as the Sovereigns passed the Emperor spoke to each of the men and the Empress said a few gracious words to the ladies, and whoever first finished the "moving" conversation—this was usually Napoleon III—awaited the other. The prefect of the palace on duty announced that dinner was served, and led the way, the Emperor following with the Empress on his arm, except when Royalties were present. We passed first through the Throne Room, which was next the Private Drawing-Room, and we then entered the Salon Louis XIV, so called because the whole of the wall facing the windows was hung with a piece of Gobelins tapestry which was a faithful reproduction of the painting in which the great monarch is shown presenting the young King Philip V of Spain to his future subjects.

The Empress once called my attention to the fact that the Cardinal Portocarrero, who headed the deputation to Louis XIV, was a member of her family, Portocarrero being her father's surname before he inherited his title. When Queen Isabella of Spain, after the Revolution of 1868, visited the Tuileries for the first time, she stopt in front of this tapestry. "There," said she, "is the beginning. And here"—pointing to herself—"is the

end!" But events proved her to be wrong—Queen Isabella was not the "end" of the Monarchy.

The Emperor sat directly under this tapestry facing the windows, having the Empress and the aide-de-camp in attendance at his left. The Prince Imperial and the lady-in-waiting were at his right. The Adjutant-General of the palace faced the Emperor, and the rest of the company sat where they pleased. At these informal dinners the Emperor's military staff was represented by the aide-de-camp and the orderly officers, the civilian household by the equerry and chamberlain on duty, the Empress's household by a lady-in-waiting, a maid of honor and a chamberlain, that of the Prince Imperial by an aide-de-camp and his tutor. If one adds to these the Adjutant-General and the prefect of the palace, the two nieces of the Empress, their governess, the colonel or the major of the battalion stationed at the Tuileries, and lastly, young Louis Conneau, an accurate picture can be obtained of the gathering round the Imperial table, about twenty persons in all, when there were no invited guests. The gala dinners were held in the Galerie de Diane, which terminated the suite of State rooms on that side of the Tuileries.

On the occasion of a great State ball much the same sort of transformation which metamorphoses the apartments of the average Parisian when he entertains his guests at a soirée, happened at the Tuileries.

The refreshments were served in the Galerie de Diane. The Salon Louis XIV and the Throne Room were reserved for presentations and the diplomatic circle, whilst the hosts and their household borrowed for the occasion the dining-room of the officers in attendance, which room was once, I believe, the drawing-room of the Empress Joséphine. After dinner we waited a few mo-

ments in the adjoining room, known as the Salle de Félix.[1] This was an apartment filled to overflowing with a varied assortment of incongruous objects, ranging from some extraordinary paintings, the work of a Siamese prince, to models of new rifles submitted to the Emperor by unknown inventors.

We then returned to the Empress's private suite of rooms, where we awaited the hour to form the State procession and make a solemn entry from the Galerie de Diane into the Salon Louis XIV.

I shall not describe the State balls beyond saying that I received an entirely new impression, which was almost a revelation to me, of the beauty of the Empress when I first saw her seated beside the Emperor on a raised dais, whilst the Quadrille d'Honneur was danced before them in the Salle des Maréchaux. Under the glow of the chandeliers, her brow encircled with a dazzling halo of diamonds, and enveloped in the splendor of her Imperial mantle, she found again all the glory of her youth. I could trace in her features and in her eyes that suggestion of dreamy languor which may have exprest no more than the vague weariness of a mind idly bored with the emptiness of official pomp. How beautiful she was then, yet how much less alive than at our informal evenings!

I shall say nothing more about the State functions, nor about the "Mondays" or the concerts; all these have been, or will be, described by pens skilled in such work. I have likewise nothing to say about the State dinners. The Prince was hardly ever present at them, which made it unnecessary for his tutor to attend. The "family

[1] Felix was the chief of the ushers, an eccentric and humorous personage, who was a mine of information about a host of matters hidden from the vulgar. Therefore the classically-minded Conti invariably referred to him as "Félix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas."

dinners" alone have remained vivid in my memory, not because the silver-gilt dinner service presented by the City of Paris to Napoleon I was always used on these occasions, or because we ate our strawberries and cream on Sèvres dessert plates upon which some great artist had painted a Sevigné or a Montespan, but because these dinners were of special interest owing to the presence of all the members of the Bonaparte family, who reproduced every shade and variation of the original type, each of them the heir to some particle of the personality of the great Emperor.

My eyes would continually wander from Prince Napoleon to Cardinal Bonaparte, then to the Comtesse Primoli, the daughter of King Joseph, or to Prince Lucien, son of the Prince de Canino. The prince-philosopher, the pious timid priest, the old scholar deep in his studies of pisciculture and philology, the literature-loving Princess who was a bit of a blue-stocking—all these had upon them the Napoleonic mark, and knew it.

But it was a silent vision, as the military band played at these dinners and rendered conversation impossible. On ordinary occasions we never missed a single word spoken by the Empress; unfortunately ours were not the only ears which listened to the frank and outspoken comments on people and things which sometimes escaped from her lips. Many of these remarks were quoted the next morning in the newspapers, and one journalist in particular was most to be dreaded, as he was the most accurate in his revelations. I do not remember his real nom-de-plume, so I will describe him by that of "Testis."

One evening, when the Empress was playfully alluding to those people who treated her with little respect, she

said, laughing lightly: "Well, I only hope 'Testis' is not present."

"'Testis' *was* present, Madame," wrote the unknown in the morning edition of the paper where the harmless incident was fully described. The explanation was, however, quite simple. The majority of the servants at the Tuileries were respectable, loyal persons, but there were some exceptions. Others again, whilst well-intentioned and proof against bribery, were foolish enough to let themselves be drawn into talking. It came out that the son of one of the stewards, who had been well educated at the expense of the Empress, had risen to the position of editor of one of the Opposition newspapers, whose methods were those of calumny and insult. This man was naturally in a position to hear all that transpired at the Tuileries, and he used his knowledge in the manner described.

After dinner the men retired downstairs to smoke, as the Emperor's cigaret alone was permitted in the salon, where he sat at the end of the table absorbed in playing patience. The children played in the Throne Room, for children will be children all the world over, and the Throne and the heavy draperies of its canopy were ideally suited to a game of hide-and-seek. Sometimes they acted charades which were arranged by M. de Valabrègue, who claimed to be an expert in such trifles. But apart from the fun of dressing up in an old pelisse, or else pretending to be a bear, with a fur muff over one's head, or the joy of blacking one's face with burnt cork, I cannot remember that these charades achieved any very great measure of success.

Occasionally the Empress would take one of us with her into a quiet corner, and then one of those interminable conversations would begin, of the duration of which she was never conscious. Those who grew tired of standing

would withdraw and seek a seat in another room. She never noticed anything, especially if she was relating a story: she was very fond of doing this, and she told her stories extremely well.

Whenever she wanted to think, and not to talk, she would say to the maids of honor: "Are we not going to have a little music this evening?" and one after the other the poor girls would go to the piano with an air of resignation, and there followed a certain amount of noise, to which those present were supposed to listen.

Sometimes the Emperor summoned us all to play cards, and in order to stimulate the players without rousing the passions of the gambler, each person received a certain number of new coins fresh from the Mint. But no sooner did the Emperor notice that the card-players had begun to use their own money than he instantly terminated the game. Card-playing, like music, was only a means of filling up the evening and making some pretense of occupation during those long hours of idleness—an idleness which covered up the consuming activity of public life.

I have often wondered what thoughts crossed the mind of Napoleon III as he sat arranging his endless patience—which, by the way, he would occasionally "dodge"—or as he played *trente-et-un* with us. Did he, the once absolute monarch, regret the power which he had, already, half abdicated?

His thoughts, however, remained a mystery to us. We guessed a little of what troubled them both from the jumpy and highly strung state in which we sometimes saw the Empress. When the Prince had gone to bed and the Emperor had retired to his study, the Empress, left alone with us, would ask us to read her the reports of the public meetings. Paris was then alive with these meetings when

everything and everybody connected with the Empire was grossly insulted by Mégy, Théophore Budaille and other grotesque celebrities of the time whose very names are now forgotten. It was a cruel ordeal—as I know from bitter experience—for the person who had the duty to read out before the Empress these offensive ravings. If one stopt in confusion she insisted upon hearing everything, upon draining the cup of bitterness to the dregs. I can see her now listening with a kind of melancholy resignation, occasionally broken by a start of pain. One could feel already the revolutionary blast. All these speeches, of which she tasted the venom, drop by drop, were signs of moral insurrection. Sometimes facts followed words, and the tumult of the streets reached our ears. Here are some notes I wrote on returning to my room during the "white overalls" riots in Paris after the elections of 1869:

"To-night, gala soirée in honor of the Queen of Holland and the Grand-Duchess Marie of Russia. The Empress presented me to the Queen, saying as she did so, 'This is M. Filon, my little boy's tutor!' A State dinner, a command performance, a ball, and then supper. During the performance telegram after telegram is brought the Emperor, who opens none of them but continues to applaud the actors with the greatest unconcern. Everyone seems anxious and ill at ease, and many throw involuntary glances at the windows which look on the Place du Carrousel, over which an angry mob is swarming. Waldteufel's orchestra plays its most entrancing waltzes, and five or six couples venture on the floor. Waltzing, to-night, is an act of loyalty to the Empire. When the music stops we can hear the yells of the mob under the charges of the police. At supper there are many empty tables: to sup is also a proof of courage."

All our evenings, during long weeks, were more or less like that one. It was impossible not to call to mind the scenes which had been enacted in this very palace eighty years previously, and that other Queen who had gone through the same mental anguish. I became obsessed with this comparison, and it was with this thought that I then read Madame Campan's "Memoirs." I described, in a letter to my mother, the impression made upon me by their perusal in the following terms:

"It is extraordinary how much our own Empress resembles poor Marie Antoinette. The similarity is most striking, especially in their manner of treating their entourage and in their friendships. One finds in both the same love of homely amusements; the same passion for arranging, ornamenting and changing their surroundings; the same desire to please; the same haughtiness, followed by bursts of sentimental emotion; the same vivacity, broken by short fits of melancholy and bitterness. I find in the pages of good Madame Campan remarks which I can fancy myself hearing from the Empress's lips. I think I may add, too, that in both one sees the same moral virtue and the same innocence of heart, and again that desire to be popular, rather with the masses than with individuals. Please God the conclusion of the drama may be different!"

At this juncture one question naturally arises: What was, in sober fact, the part actually played by the Empress in politics? What was this political rôle of hers, which has been so strangely exaggerated and distorted, alike by the enemies and by the friends of the Empire?

I should like to give an answer to this question; but, having been an eye-witness only of the latter days, and my personal knowledge of the Empress's political action being limited to the period of her last Regency, that is to say the

weeks immediately preceding the fall of the Empire, I can only reply, for the events previous to my arrival at the Tuileries, on general impressions fortified by some reminiscences of the Empress herself and on my own knowledge of her character, which I believe to be accurate. The reader can accept or reject my evidence, according to the value he attaches to the writer's judgment.

Up to the year 1860, to the best of my belief, the popular verdict on the Empress was that dress and *chiffons* absorbed her entire attention. It was from the day when the question of Italian unity was definitely raised and when this unity, already half achieved, began to threaten the temporal power of the Pope, that whispers began to be started about the political influence of the Empress. She was said to have her "set"—even, it was rumored, her "party." I wonder who first invented this "party" of the Empress's? Certainly not the Empress, and as certainly not the members of the "party," since none existed! During my three years of Court life I could never discover the least trace of this imaginary party. Were the enemies of the Empire, then, the originators of the legend? Doubtless they seized upon this political myth and exploited it for all it was worth, but the true origin of it was quite different.

Strange to say, it was the Emperor himself who first set the ball rolling, and the idea was suggested to him by a woman, gifted with more brains than conscience. This woman had formerly been his mistress, and she intended to remain his confidential adviser. Her beauty had quickly faded, but she hoped to maintain her position by sheer force of intellect, and to become the close friend and trusted counselor of her whom she had betrayed. The Empress did not fathom the secret of this machiavellian

plot, but she showed no willingness to fall in with the scheme, which she did not understnd. The idea of setting herself up in opposition to the Emperor, from whom she had derived all her notions of politics and in whose wisdom she placed implicit reliance, would never have occurred to her. Still less could she have conceived that the Emperor found it to his advantage to allow people to believe in such a divergence of policy. Yet this was indeed the fact.

For the policy of the Emperor had actually reached an important turning-point. During the previous eight years it had been characterized by great directness and by vigorous unity at home and abroad; it now appeared to waver and hesitate. Napoleon III had resolved to organize French democracy on Parliamentary lines, and he felt the need of establishing, outside the Crown, two great political parties upon which he could lean alternately and which would ensure the play of free institutions. The Italian question provided two convenient platforms on which these two parties could organize themselves. Each of them, however, was to supplement its attitude on this question by a program of action, or of reaction, in home politics. One party should urge the Empire forward towards great liberal and democratic reforms, the other would hark back to the *régime* of 1852, would insist on the important part to be played by the Church in national education and in social management, and would keep open before the fighting services vistas of great and distant adventures.

This two-party system has been called the policy of "see-saw," because people will always find ugly names to stigmatize unsuccessful enterprises or still-born projects. Yet nothing could have been more logical or more feasible, had these two parties accepted the Emperor, as the

Emperor accepted them. Could he reasonably foresee that these two sets of men, whom everything seemed to divide, would eventually unite against him, welded together by a common hatred?

In 1860 and during the years that followed it was necessary for the Emperor to encourage both parties and to maintain the balance between them. Now he had already given pledges to carbonarism and even to socialism. The memories of the Romagna rebellion, the writings of the prisoner of Ham, not to speak of the letter to Edgar Ney, were so many guarantees of good faith to the Liberals. The problem was to find a counterpoise to these various indications, which pointed to the Emperor as being more or less consciously sympathetic with the aims of Garibaldi. The solution was to allow the clerical party and the ultramontanes to imagine that the Empress was on their side, and that her influence was being constantly exerted in their favor. Such was the origin of the "Empress's party."

Eugénie was a Spaniard; it was easy to believe her superstitious. And so people pictured her ever kneeling on the flagged stones in old cathedrals, telling her beads in trance-like contemplation of the lighted tapers which burned before the shrines of Notre Dame del Pilar or Notre Dame d'Atocha. The picture, however, would have been very different had they known of her childhood in Paris, of the liberal atmosphere in which she grew up, storing up in her mind, not saintly legends, but Napoleonic memories, as she sat on the knee of the author of the "Chartreuse de Parme." She was, indeed, far less superstitious than the Emperor, who wore constantly on his person, as protecting talismans, written prayers sent to him by unknown women and even a medallion given him

by Mlle. Déjazet before his escape from Ham. It would be an exaggeration to say that she was excessively pious, for her religious practices were moderate, and at no time of her life did she surround herself with priests. She was just a good Catholic—and no more. Her respect for priests never went to the length of allowing them to interfere with her own line of conduct, and I think she was very far indeed from approving the notion that they should regulate the affairs of the community. I suppose, although I have never heard her say so, that she believed in the necessity of temporal power to enable the Pope to maintain his independence and dignity, but she could not forget the ingratitude which the Papacy had shown Napoleon, and in this, as in everything else, she was at one with her husband. If there was a party of the Empress, she never belonged to it; she belonged to the Emperor's party. In the same way that the wife of a lawyer takes especial interest in his cases and the wife of a poet in the success of her husband's books, as the wife of an artist often suggests ideas for his pictures, is enthusiastic for such and such a school of painting, dreams of the *médaille d'honneur* or the Institute and loathes the critic who speaks slightingly of his work, just as the wife of an officer pores over the Army List, has all the promotions at her finger-ends and shudders at rumors of war, so did the Empress take her full share of everything, happy or tragic, that touched the Emperor.

She had certainly, in politics, her ideals, or, if one prefers it, her utopias; but politics as a business she abhorred. When she was at Camden Place during the Emperor's captivity she often showed me letters containing a thousand and one more or less silly suggestions written from Geneva or Brussels by former ladies of the

Court who imagined themselves gifted with political instinct. The Empress would say, in handing me the letters: "Can you conceive of any woman wanting to meddle in politics unless she is driven to it by circumstances?" The last was unfortunately her case.

I have already stated that she was Napoleon III's second conscience. She put at his service her gift of intuition, her unerring instinct, and he, who was a firm believer in the power of intuition and the infallibility of instinct, consulted his wife as some persons consult a medium.[1] Often he disregarded her advice; sometimes, after accepting it, he changed his mind, but she never took it ill.

One evening, during the riots in 1869, of which I have already spoken, the Emperor took his wife's arm, intending to pay a surprise visit to a detachment of a line regiment billeted in the great hall known as the "Galerie du bord de l'eau." There were rumors of risings in several districts of Paris, and there was a possibility of the palace being attacked; hence the presence of the troops. The men were having their dinner, probably a much better meal than usual, and it was expected that the arrival of the Sovereigns would electrify their loyalty.

"Let us go," assented the Empress; but she had not yet reached the Galerie de Diane when she stopt dead. "This will remind everyone of the dinner of October 2, 1789, of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette at the banquet

[1] The high opinion which the Emperor had of the political talents of the Empress has already been referred to. He was, however, mistaken in her powers when he tried to use her for diplomatic negotiations, and I believe Baron de Hubner's revelations, in his Memoirs, concerning these attempts and their failure, to be entirely correct. Evidently the Empress must have been a very poor diplomat, if the art of Diplomacy consists in being able to conceal one's real intentions, to appear indifferent when one is consumed with anxiety, and, like Musset's dancing master, to look to the right when one wants to go to the left.

of the Body Guards!" I heard her say, as I was standing quite near. "Don't you think so?" she added turning to me, evidently appealing to me as to a witness, for she could not have thought for a moment that I could have presumed to offer advice to my Sovereign. I answered by a vague gesture, and the others present did likewise. She pursued the subject for some time, speaking excitedly. The Emperor returned to the drawing-room without saying a word; but the next evening, the circumstances being unchanged, the projected visit was carried out.

In September, 1903, the Empress talked to me very frankly about these bygone days. "I was always opposed," she said, "to the idea of the Emperor going any further in his liberal reforms. In my view he should have remained as he was, and political freedom would have been the gift of his son's accession."

"Did your Majesty consider," I answered, "the possible upheaval which might then have taken place in a great country like ours, suddenly emancipated without preparation or experience, and intoxicated with its freedom after so many years of subjection? What might not have happened in such a case, under an inexperienced Prince, perhaps during a Minority?"

"I relied," replied the Empress, "on the generosity of the French nation."

However this might be, she had accepted the Emperor's decision, and felt that the experiment, once begun, had to be loyally carried out. She says this herself in a letter which most certainly was not intended for publication. The members of the Commission which dealt with the "Papers found at the Tuileries" thought fit to see in it only the mistakes in spelling. History will find in it, I believe, indisputable evidence of the good faith, sense and

patriotism of the Empress. The letter, which is addrest to the Emperor, runs as follows:

"My very dear Louis,

"I am writing to you on my way down the Nile. . . . I have news of you and of Louis every day by telegraph. This is wonderful and very delightful to me, for I feel linked with my dear home shores by this wire which connects me with all I love. . . .

"I was very worried about yesterday's event, and to know that you were in Paris without me, but all went well, as I see by your telegram. . . . I feel that you must not get disheartened and that you should persevere in the course you have mapped out. . . . I hope you will take this line in your address.

"I am perhaps too far away and out of touch with events to speak in this way, but I feel thoroughly convinced that continuity of policy is the only real strength. I dislike violent changes, and do not believe that it is possible to bring off a *coup d'état* twice in one reign. I am really talking at random, for I am preaching to one converted, and who knows more of the subject than I do, but I must say something if only to prove to you what you know already, that my heart is near to you both; and if, on peaceful days, my truant mind loves to wander off into space, it is with the two of you I want to be when trouble and anxiety are near. Here, far from men and things, there is an atmosphere of peace which does good to the soul, and I am apt to fancy that all is well, because I know nothing."

This letter, which I have not given in its entirety, is an invaluable document, as from it one could reconstruct the

whole character of the Empress if all other evidence were missing. It is all there—her outspoken candor tempered by real humility, her fundamental and incorruptible sincerity, with that combination of heroism and shrewdness, of common sense and imagination, which made of this Spaniard a perfect Frenchwoman, and with that direct and simple tenderness as wife and mother, so different from that tragic and grandiose attitude which some people would make us believe was hers. Above all it is easy to see in what sense and to what extent she felt herself entitled to give advice, and the tone she adopted in doing so. In nine cases out of ten she was the echo of the Emperor's own thoughts.

When the Ministry of January 2, 1870, came into office, M. Emile Ollivier's first act was to preclude the Empress from attending the Council of Ministers as she had done for so many years. During our conversation of September, 1903, she reminded me of this, and I criticized severely the action of the then Prime Minister. "But why blame him?" she replied. "After all, it was quite a logical conclusion that I had no further need to learn a business with which I had no more to do."

We shall see later that circumstances compelled her return to the effective chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, and M. Ollivier himself had to beg her to attend. But that day was as yet distant, and a feeling of optimism prevailed in Parliamentary and Ministerial circles. This feeling of optimism spread even to the palace, on the morrow of the plebiscite, and for a moment I could believe that the Empire would endure.

CHAPTER V

THE REGENCY (July 28–August 7, 1870)

SAINT CLOUD had never seemed more beautiful than in the summer of 1870, and never had I felt so intensely the atmosphere of majestic repose which, for me, belongs to this great residence. Altho the plebiscite of May 8 had not produced all the results hoped for, it had greatly deprest the extremists, and this feeling of discouragement had brought the Government appreciable relief. This state of affairs was very welcome to us after the constant unrest and excitement of the last year. We still dared not hope for permanent happiness in the future, but we began to believe in the possibility of a peaceful to-morrow!

There was, however, no question of entertaining; the only wish of the sovereigns was for complete rest and quiet. Those who had known the Court ten or twelve years earlier in the days of the great *cocodettes* would never have recognized it. "The Court is nothing but a boarding-school," said one of the gentlemen in the smoking-room. And another replied in an acid tone: "You mean a nursery!" As a matter of fact, the two nieces of the Empress, the two daughters of Mme. Walewska (the elder of whom was almost a child), the Prince and his friend Louis Conneau constituted a very youthful group, which was reinforced by the two maids of honor, Mlle. de Larminat and Mlle. d'Elbée. This happy, playful, chattering world, disturbed only by passing quarrels, was indeed vastly different from the atmosphere of intrigue and plotting of a former day.

My room, on the second floor, looked out on the great avenue of chestnut trees which stretches on a long upward slope behind the château in the direction of Villeneuve.

From this sanctum I could often hear someone strumming on the piano, someone else reading aloud, peals of laughter, which echoed from room to room and were lost at last in the vastness of the château. Then silence fell, a deep silence, unbroken save for the incessant whispering of the leaves and the distant murmur of the fountains. In this peaceful environment it was easy to forget the existence of that great city ever seething with feverish agitation, but which was nevertheless still discernible, enveloped in its curtain of mist, from the highest windows of the eastern front of the palace.

Twice a week, about ten o'clock, a strange procession ascended the slope and entered the courtyard of the palace. This procession consisted of a string of about ten carriages, in which sat the Ministers who had come to attend the council, and who would afterwards lunch with the Imperial family and the members of the household. These gentlemen took good care never to mention politics to us, and as soon as they were gone Saint Cloud resumed its appearance of melancholy and lonely grandeur, which was only disturbed by the sound of childish voices in some distant corners.

I have delayed almost involuntarily to recall the memories of these last untroubled days, this final lull before the tempest burst which was to sweep away the palace and those who lived in it. I can remember nothing very definite occurring at this time, and no particular incident excepting Prévost-Paradol's visit to the Empress. This was not long before the final catastrophe, and Prévost-Paradol had just accepted the position of Minister

at Washington: he had been advised to make this visit, and he had agreed, I imagine, with no great enthusiasm. The Empress, however, who was very anxious to create a good impression on M. Prévost-Paradol, made careful enquiries about him, gave particular instructions for his reception, and told me to receive him and present him to her.

I therefore met Prévost-Paradol as he entered the first drawing-room, and introduced myself. "The Empress," I said, "wishes that an old student of the Ecole Normale should act as her chamberlain to-day, in order that you may feel at home and with friends from the moment you cross this threshold." He smiled, but said nothing: perhaps because he was at a loss how to reply, perhaps because he was out of breath through having come upstairs too quickly. When he left at the end of a quarter of an hour he was equally taciturn, and gave no hint of the impression he had received.

The Empress pronounced his manners perfect, but she seemed slightly disconcerted, and, to be plain, a little disappointed by his chilling attitude; the greatness of the man had not been apparent.

The days which elapsed between the first rumors of war and the departure of the Emperor to join the army have left me nothing beyond the chaotic and confused memories of a dreadful nightmare. Hardly had we been alarmed by the candidature of a Hohenzollern Prince for the Spanish throne than our minds were set at ease by his father's renunciation of his son's claims, but no sooner did we breathe freely than some new cause for anxiety arose. One day it was Emile Ollivier who startled the echoes of the Palais-Bourbon with his famous words: "The incident is closed!" and the next day we were

confronted by the bellicose note issued by the Duc de Gramont demanding a formal renunciation, present and future, on the part of the head of the House of Hohenzollern, the King of Prussia himself. The Ems incident was the retort to this note, and was itself answered by a declaration of war. We had no time to collect our thoughts, or even to breathe, and we passed from a state of complete security and pleasant lethargy to one of the most intense anxiety.

What were the thoughts of the Emperor? His thoughts were a complete mystery to us all; even the former members of the household who were deputies[1] had to ask for a special audience whenever they wished to discuss any political question with him.

I have seen the Marquis d'Havrincourt, who exercised deservedly very considerable influence in Parliament, leave the palace after his term of attendance lasting for a fortnight without having exchanged five minutes' conversation with the Emperor. But in face of this, if one refers to the newspapers of the day, they will be found full of denunciations against "the evil ascendancy of the entourage." M. Thiers said to all who cared to listen: "We shall not have war, the Emperor does not wish it." I have since known that M. Thiers was right. However, on July 15, 1870, we did not know as much as we do now, and directly lunch with the Ministers was over, we all rushed to get the newspapers and read the latest news.

The Empress, as a rule, never troubled to conceal her thoughts, but in these days of doubt and waiting she felt it necessary to be cautious. M. Thiers, who knew the truth, but who often preferred its opposite in practice, did

[1] A recent law had been passed requiring such members of the household to choose between their office at Court and their parliamentary duties.

not scruple at a later date to circulate a fictitious remark which the Empress was supposed to have made in the course of conversation with M. Lesourd, a well-known diplomat; this remark would have thrown upon her the responsibility for the disaster which overwhelmed France. In fact the Empress was reported to have said to M. Lesourd: "This war is *my* war!"

M. Rouher sent for M. Lesourd and questioned him: "Did the Empress really say these words to you?"

"Never."

"Then did she say anything like them?"

"The Empress never said these words or any similar ones."

"Are you willing to put down this statement in writing and bear witness to the truth?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And will you authorize me to publish it?"

"Undoubtedly."

M. Rouher took this letter to the Empress, but he thought it only right to tell her that M. Lesourd's ruin was certain if he gave the lie direct to the head of the Government, and also that it was necessary for M. Lesourd to retain his employment in order to live. The Empress said nothing, but locked the letter away in a drawer, where doubtless it has remained to this day.

During our exile the Empress explained to me with the utmost frankness what she really felt, and the part she had played when war was declared between France and Germany. What, then, was her part? Five words will suffice. She played no part whatever. As for her feelings, they were those of the majority of Frenchwomen. She had been told that war was inevitable, and that immediate action was preferable to letting the chances of success

gradually diminish with the years. She believed this, and it is difficult to see how she could have done otherwise, as she always deferred respectfully to the superior knowledge of experts and specialists. She therefore accepted the conflict as a painful necessity.

As for the Prince Imperial, so soon as he knew that he would go to the front his delight was unbounded, and he was rather vexed with me for being so deprest.

The last excursion which the Empress made with the Prince Imperial before he left was a pilgrimage to the Malmaison. We drove thither in wagonettes, and entered the park by a gate from the open country. We crossed the charming lawns and the bowling-green where Bourrienne had sighed for the love of young Hortense de Beauharnais, and when we entered the house the Empress acted as our guide.

"These are the embroidery wools belonging to the Empress Josephine," she said, showing us a work-basket containing a quantity of tangled skeins of wool.

I was most imprest by the First Consul's study, which was an imitation of an army tent, being draped with striped blue and white canvas. But everything smelt of damp and mildew, and, even on this bright summer day, the house and gardens had a melancholy and deserted appearance in keeping with the sinister memories which the name of the place recalls.

* * * * *

I was present when the Emperor received the address of the Senate. The presentation took place in the Galerie de Diane which extended almost entirely over the first floor of the left wing of the Tuileries, and was furnished with antique cabinets and beautiful bronzes. I believe I am right in saying it was in this hall that the crown of

France was offered to Napoleon I by the representatives of the nation.

The Senators of 1870 arrived in a state of great excitement, but the gloomy, almost dejected mien of the Emperor, so different from his habitual public manner, absolutely froze the hearts of his listeners, and I can still see the expression on their faces when the Emperor spoke the words:

"We are about to commence a long and arduous war."

After the reception I heard many adverse comments very freely exprest.

It was in this same hall, towards the end of July—the evening of the 27th if my memory serves me right—that all the officers and ladies of the household then in residence, numbering about forty, were invited to dine and bid farewell to the Emperor and the Prince. During dessert the Guards' band played the "Marseillaise" for the first time since its prohibition eighteen years previously. That evening, I also remember, witnessed a wonderful display of shooting stars, and one of the young ladies assured me with the utmost gravity that if we had time to say "Victory" before the star went out the success of our arms would be a foregone conclusion.

The Emperor left Paris on July 28. The special train in which he traveled was drawn up near the Orleans gate on a private line which left the enclosed part of the park and joined the main line from Paris to Versailles. The departure was of a strictly private character, and only the Ministers of State and the members of the household witnessed the farewells of the Imperial family. To the last minute the Empress maintained a calm and smiling demeanor. Just as the train was slowly moving off she called out to the Prince:

"I trust, Louis, that you will do your duty."

The Emperor and the Prince who were standing close to the half-lowered window of the carriage both answered the Empress, but I could not catch what they said, as their words were lost in the cheers of those on the platform, and a few seconds later the cry of "Long live the Emperor!" was taken up by the waiting crowds outside. This was the last time that I heard this loyal cry in France.

As I was returning to the Tuileries with M. de Parieu, the Empress drove by. She was alone in her carriage with the Princess Clotilde, and both she and the Princess were in tears. M. de Parieu, who knew my opinions, turned to me and said as the carriage disappeared:

"You know, of course, that everyone says the Empress has been exerting her influence for war? Well, I happen to know that this is untrue. The other day when I was leaving the council, she said to me, 'What do you think of all this, M. de Parieu?' I replied: 'Madame, I think that if England were to offer her mediation, we should be very wrong not to accept it.' And she answered: 'I think so too.'"

The Emperor's chief secretary, M. Conti, was absent, taking the waters at Orezza, on account of serious illness. The confidential secretary, Franceschini Pietri, had gone with Napoleon III to the front, and as there could be no question of M. Damas Hinard, the Empress's private secretary, taking any part in political affairs, it was arranged that I should act as secretary to the Regent, and in this capacity I was entrusted with the cipher used in the correspondence between the Sovereigns.

I thought at first that my duties would be merely a sinecure. The Empress had no experience, or conception,

of the routine and work thrown upon the effective head of a State. Besides, she was never consulted, and could barely count on being informed of decisions after they had been taken. She was Regent in name only, and she wielded no power as Regent. So that I was far from realizing the part which circumstances, combined with her own force of character, would assign to her in the direction of political affairs.

However, after two or three days I began to understand her better. She put aside paper work, red tape, and Cabinet routine, but she had mapped out a clear line of conduct with a double end in view, which she hoped to attain through her woman's wit and resource. This double end was: firstly, to gain adherents in the ranks of the various opposition parties and thereby to unite them in a common patriotic enthusiasm; and secondly, to gain allies for France among the foreign Powers.

In order to carry out the first part of the program it was necessary to quiet the Press, which now displayed a general tone of violence and denunciation. The Empress therefore asked me to write to Paul de Cassagnac and appeal to his generosity, his loyalty and his political wisdom. M. de Cassagnac answered my letter at once, and his reply left nothing to be desired. At the same time the Empress sent me to interview M. Adelon, Emile Ollivier's secretary, and ask him to moderate his zeal in a certain affair then pending which concerned the life of two Paris newspapers; one, *La Presse*, was unable to pay a fine for some misdemeanor and in consequence was liable to be supprest, dragging with it in its fall *Le Rappel*, another important newspaper.

I saw at once that M. Adelon had an entirely erroneous idea of the Regent's character: he thought at first that I

had come to insist upon measures of exceptional severity, possibly even to demand the heads of the accused journalists. He was therefore very surprized when he found that the Empress was more liberal in her ideas than he was himself! But he did not attempt to disguise his opinion—which I fully shared—that in dealing with members of the opposition generosity would only be regarded as a sign of weakness, and would not arouse any feelings of gratitude. He was in favor of letting things take their course, subject to granting a free pardon to the offending *La Presse* if that paper asked for it.

"And what if *La Presse* does *not?*" I asked.

Monsieur Adelon did not reply, but he made a vague gesture which might have signified: "Well, in this case we shall wash our hands of them." I made my adieux shortly afterwards, and reported the result of the interview to the Empress, who still persisted in her attempt at conciliation. The affair of *La Presse* and *La Rappel*, which had been set down for the next day, was postponed for a week, and after that never appeared again in the cause list.[1]

Of far greater importance was the question of foreign alliances. From the first hour of war England stood aloof from us: Lord Granville, who was in Paris, first concealed his whereabouts and then vanished; Lord Lyons, the English Ambassador, had been also told to remain invisible. The task of awakening the memory and the conscience of Italy fell to Prince Napoleon, the son-in-law of Victor Emmanuel. At St. Petersburg we had an exceptionally able representative who stood high in Court favor; of this I had

[1] Some years after my interview with M. Adelon one of the newspapers which owed its salvation to my visit to the Place Vendôme, announcing the death of my father, mistook him for me and pronounced *my* funeral oration in these words: "We are well rid of one more of that crowd." But it was fortunate for the newspaper in question that I did not entertain similar feelings towards it in July, 1870!

proof later on, when I saw the consideration and sympathy which Alexander II showed to him. Less than ten days before the Revolution broke out General Count Fleury had obtained serious guarantees from the Tsar, involving the intervention of Russia on the questions of maintenance of the dynasty and the integrity of French territory.

The Empress reserved to herself the task of influencing Austria through Prince Metternich. She had a lengthy conversation with him which cannot have been devoid of interest or result, since the Empress decided to report it to the Emperor in person. I was actually making arrangements to accompany her on her journey to Metz when events intervened to prevent her from carrying out this plan.

As early as July 30, that is to say on the next day but one after Napoleon III had left for Metz, the Empress had received a letter from him which threw her into a state of the utmost consternation. The Emperor said that on his arrival he had found everywhere confusion, disorder and quarreling, and that nothing was in readiness for the advance! Now the Emperor, who knew only too well our inferiority in numbers, had trusted that the rapidity of the French mobilization would give us the advantage over the proverbial slowness of the Germans. It was upon this belief that his plan of campaign was founded. He hoped by a double thrust to separate North Germany from South Germany, and so allow the latter to shake off her yoke, not as yet firmly established, and under our auspices to avenge herself for the humiliation of 1866. In the event of this Austria would no longer hesitate to declare herself on the side of France.[1] But the plan was hope-

[1] The Emperor has explained this plan of campaign in the pamphlet: "On the causes which contributed to the capitulation of Sedan," by "a staff-captain." I saw him write this at Chislehurst.

less as soon as it became clear that the commander-in-chief had only half the expected number of men available, and that the transport and supply services were non-existent and had not even begun to be organized.

The gloomy tone of this letter had profoundly imprest the Empress; it foreshadowed the coming disasters. However, on August 2 a joint telegram from the Emperor and the Prince Imperial reached Saint Cloud, announcing the French advance and the engagement at Sarrebrück. The text of the Emperor's telegram, which was of an absolutely private nature and which the Empress wished to keep to herself, was published by order of the Ministry, and caused a storm of pitiless raillery from the opposition Press. This is what the telegram contained:

"Louis has just received his baptism of fire. His coolness was admirable. He was as unconcerned as if he had been strolling in the Bois de Boulogne.

"One of General Frossard's divisions has carried the heights which dominate the left bank of the river at Sarrebrück. The Prussians made only a slight resistance. There was only desultory rifle and artillery fire. We were in the front line, but the shots fell at our feet. Louis has kept a bullet which fell close to where he was standing. Some of the soldiers wept when they saw him so cool.

"Our losses are—one officer killed and ten men wounded."

I wrote at once to the Prince and received a reply from him on the afternoon of August 4. This letter (the contents of which I have given in my book on the Prince Imperial) gave one last moment of happiness to the Empress. Even as she read the letter the fatal action of Wissembourg, where General Abel Douay fell, was opening the long series of our reverses. The news of this

disaster reached Saint Cloud during the night of August 4–5, but the people of Paris heard of it only at two o'clock on August 5, when the announcement was posted at the Bourse, and, as everyone knows, it was impossible to have chosen a worse hour for such a disclosure, or one more likely to throw the market off its balance.

Lavisse, who came to see me at Saint Cloud, called my attention to this and to its probable consequences, and I communicated his report to the Empress. I do not know whether this ill-advised measure was actually due to M. Chevandier de Valdrôme, Minister of the Interior, or to the Prime Minister. I merely emphasize the fact that the Regent had no responsibility whatever for it.

During the next twenty-four hours Paris was in a state of ever-increasing ferment. Popular anger ran high and, having no other outlet, vented itself in the wreckage of one or two offices of money-changers with German names. Suddenly, towards noon, the news of a great victory gained by MacMahon spread like a train of gunpowder, and all the central quarters of Paris gave themselves up to an orgy of rejoicing. The reporters, all agog, besieged the Ministry of the Interior, and speculation on the Bourse rose by leaps and bounds. But we knew nothing at Saint Cloud, and Clément Duvernois sent one of his sub-editors to tell us what was happening in Paris.

This person arrived at Saint Cloud at about three o'clock, and after hearing what he had to relate, the Empress ordered the Marquis de Piennes and myself to go instantly to Paris. The report had been officially denied when we arrived, but half the city was still decorated: in places people were still rejoicing, while elsewhere the disappointed and infuriated populace demanded that the flags should be taken down. I went

to the Place Beauvau, and to the Place Vendôme; I spoke to several well-known politicians, all of them very uneasy, and amongst others to the Chief of Police, who remarked: "We are in for a warm time to-night."

At half-past nine we returned to Saint Cloud. We found the Empress in the middle drawing-room on the first floor next the library. She had with her the Princess d'Essling (mistress of the household); Princess de la Moskowa and the Comtesse de Rayneval (who were in attendance as ladies-in-waiting); the Comtesse Clary, whose husband was a member of the Prince Imperial's suite; Prince Metternich, who had dined at Saint Cloud that evening; her two nieces, Marie, Duchesse de Galistéo, and Louise, Duchesse de Montoro; their governess, Mlle. Redel; the Comte de Cossé-Brissac, chamberlain on duty; Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, aide-de-camp to the Emperor (who had been entrusted by the Emperor with the care of the Empress, a duty which he performed with signal devotion); Lieutenant Eugéne Conneau, a naval aide-de-camp attached to the person of the Empress; possibly two or three more were present whose names I have forgotten.

General Lepic came into the room with us. He had brought an order for the Empress's signature which would put Paris under martial law, and a letter from Emile Ollivier in which he begged the Empress in view of the gravity of the situation "to return to Paris immediately with all the troops at her disposal." We looked at each other aghast. The troops at the disposal of the Empress consisted of 160 men at the depot of the Guards Light Infantry. No matter! The Empress meekly signed the decree and promised General Lepic that she would return to the Tuileries.

The Empress then retired to her own rooms, General Lepic left for Paris, the ladies talked among themselves, and M. de Piennes and I went downstairs to get something to eat. We had hardly sat down when a telegram was brought in from General Headquarters.

We at once went back to one of the drawing-rooms, where we deciphered the contents of the telegram with the aid of M. de Cossé-Brissac. The first words fully revealed the horror of the situation. Imagine, at that late hour, the great silent room and the three men on their knees, haggard and perspiring, bending over the key chart spread out on the floor, spelling out with despair in their hearts the fatal telegram which had brought through the night the tidings of disaster and of which every word was a hammer-blow.

"Our troops," thus ran the fatal cipher, "are in full retreat. Nothing must be thought of now beyond the defense of the capital."

A second telegram followed almost immediately, announcing the defeat of MacMahon at Reichshoffen, which coincided with the defeat of Frossard at Forbach. Two great reverses in one day! There had never been a parallel case in the history of France. The second telegram concluded, it is true, with these words: "All may yet be regained," but after what went before this conclusion seemed absurd.

By this time we were stunned and almost stupefied with the horror which overwhelms the first recipients of bad news whose unpleasant duty it is to announce it to the world.

It was then half-past eleven.

"Who is going to tell the Empress?" asked the Marquis de Piennes.

M. de Brissac and I were silent. But M. de Piennes was a man of energy who made up his mind quickly.

"Very well," said he, "I will go myself."

The Marquis returned after five minutes looking very pale, and his first words were:

"Do you know what she said? 'The dynasty is lost; we must think only of France.'"

These words gave us strength; the Empress's influence was already working on us, as it was to work on all those who were to approach her during those memorable weeks. This was the real woman, she whom Admiral Jurien delighted to compare with Chimène. But how vastly greater than Chimène, since without a moment's hesitation she sacrificed her own greatness and that of her husband and her son to the national honor.

Some may say, "These were only words!" But I reply to such people that these words were no vain words. They were the expression of a certain line of conduct which she followed unswervingly, as will be shown.

In less than a quarter of an hour after the Empress had received the news of the disaster, she came back to the drawing-room, where the ladies, now aware of the dreadful events of the day, were still sitting. The Princess d'Essling came forward with outstretched arms weeping bitterly.

"Ah, Madame!" she sobbed.

"No sentiment, I implore you," replied the Empress. "I need all my courage."

I went to awaken the admiral, whose invincible optimism now asserted itself. As we came downstairs he indulged in a characteristic remark:

"Well, after all, it might have been worse," said the admiral.

How typical of a sailor who has braved innumerable tempests! The admiral possest the gift of Hope, which often endows one with the power to act. All that the admiral remembered of these dreadful telegrams was that last line: "All may yet be regained!"

The Empress decided to return to the Tuileries that very night, and telegrams were dispatched to summon thither the members of the Privy Council and the Ministers. M. de Brissac and I left in advance to make the necessary arrangements, and at a quarter to two in the morning we alighted outside the Pavillon de l'Horloge. Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers, who had been ordered to attend at midnight, had been walking about under the arch for two hours in an icy wind. He was furious, and hardly condescended to answer us when we begged him to enter the palace. The Préfet of the Seine, Henri Chevreau, and General d'Antemarre, commanding the National Guards of the Seine, were also present. At three o'clock the Empress arrived, and the council began its sitting under her chairmanship, which was, this time, a very real chairmanship, as everyone realized. The presidents of the two chambers, Rouher and Schneider, were present at this meeting, which General Chabaud-Latour and General Trochu were invited to attend, the latter being brought by Emile Ollivier. General Trochu was very popular at the moment, as he had recently aired his views on military reorganization, which were opposed to those of the Government, in a pamphlet, the publication of which constituted a breach of military discipline. It was therefore quite to be expected that the public, who always applaud insubordination, should have made a hero of General Trochu. As to the technical value of his criticisms on the Government scheme, that could only

be assessed with accuracy by members of his own profession.

Thus, on this fateful night, the Empress first made the acquaintance of General Trochu's wordy eloquence, with which she was destined soon to become familiar. When the sitting was over and the Ministers had gone, M. Trochu still talked on to two or three unimportant listeners, including Eugène Conneau and myself. I believe he would have harangued the ushers if we had gone away.

I lay down to sleep fully drest on a sofa in one of the drawing-rooms on the ground floor. When I opened my eyes I was much surprized to see, standing by the couch, Mme. Walewska, who had awakened me by a tap on the shoulder. It took me a minute or two to remember where I was, and what had happened, and why this apparition replaced the honest face of my man, Pestel, who called me every morning. It happened that Mme. Walewska had come to the Tuileries to learn what had transpired, and she had wandered about the palace until she found herself at the Empress's door. There she was told that the Regent wished to see me, and Mme. Walewska at once volunteered to go in search of me. This alone serves to show what a state of confusion reigned in the palace; there were no servants about, no sentries, and the furniture was still enveloped in its holland coverings which the Empress would not allow to be removed. During the course of the next month we led an absolutely Bohemian existence. We slept and ate where, when and in what fashion we could, we worked at any table that happened to be vacant. In a word, we were encamped at the Tuileries.

Mme. Lebreton Bourbaki, sister of the general commanding the Imperial Guard, and who acted as reader to

the Empress, had a bed made up for herself in a room adjoining the dressing-room, a room in which the Prince had worked during a whole winter whilst the Pavillon de Flore was being re-decorated and re-furnished. In this little room Mme. Lebreton Bourbaki was at all times within call of the Empress, and from the night of August 7 until her death, more than thirty years later, she never left the Empress. At the time of which I write it happened more than once that both Mme. Lebreton and myself waited on the Empress, and altho I am the least servile of men, the memory of this service, inspired by devotion, and accepted by affection, appears to me in no way irksome.

August 7 fell on a Sunday. The Regent attended early Mass in the chapel of the Tuileries, and she then asked me to go to the Place Vendôme with a message to the Prime Minister. I found the Premier fast asleep in a little room on the ground floor, destitute of almost any furniture save a bed. It appeared that on his return from the palace he had slept in this uncomfortable room in order not to disturb Mme. Ollivier. I roused him in the same manner in which I had been awakened an hour earlier—a duty one is often called upon to render in time of war or revolution, and surely we were then the victims of one of these evils, and living in constant dread of the other.

Ollivier was full of energy and resource, and he had nothing but praise for the attitude and language of the Empress at the council on the preceding night. "She was wonderful," he said, "everybody was immensely imprest."[1]

[1] We are able to trace the echo of this feeling in the evidence given before the Commission of Inquiry upon the events of the Fourth of September, not only by the adherents of the dynasty, but by men who cannot be suspected of possessing any leanings towards Imperialism. 'The Empress," said General Chabaud-Latour, ' addrest us in a most worthy and noble manner."

I left Emile Ollivier on the arrival of the Ministers who were again meeting to hold a council, as they wished to discuss the terms of their proclamation, which was posted about noon, together with a manifesto by the Regent. The Regent's manifesto was the work of M. de Lézay-Marnésia, who had occupied the position of first chamberlain to the Empress since the death of the Duc Tascher de la Pagerie: it was not amiss, but it would have been better if the Empress had relied upon herself alone for its composition. At a quarter to eight that evening the Prime Minister sent the following telegram to the Emperor:

"Public opinion remains excellent. The first general astonishment and intense grief have been succeeded by confidence and enthusiasm. Even the revolutionary party goes with the tide. One or two wretches who shouted 'Long live the Republic!' have been arrested by the people themselves. Every time the National Guard appears it is greeted with cheers. Thus—have no fear for us, and think only of giving the enemy the punishment we are all praying for. We are ready to make all necessary sacrifices.

"We are all united, and we discuss affairs in complete accord with the Privy Council.

"The Empress enjoys good health. She has shown us all a wonderful example of strength, courage and nobility of soul.

"We are more than ever at heart devoted to you."

This telegram does honor to M. Ollivier, but it shows that he was deceived on certain points, notably those concerning the patriotism of the extremists and his own situation before the country and the Chamber. Even

when the war had been popular, Ollivier did not benefit by this popularity. After our disasters, how was it possible to persuade a nation placed in a situation of the greatest peril that the men who could save it were Louvet, Chevandier de Valdrôme and Maurice Richard? They were fine-weather ministers—not ministers who could weather the storm of war.

With a lack of justice which would have been cowardly if the public had been in a normal frame of mind, general opinion turned abruptly against Ollivier, and held him responsible for a war into which he had been drawn absolutely against his wish. Even the most impartial asked whether this great Liberal orator, so excellent as an organizer of constitutional democracy, was the right man to save the country in its hour of need.

Hated by his old friends of the Left, who looked upon him as a traitor, and always suspected by the Right, the Prime Minister, since the taking of the plebiscite and the retirement of Messieurs Buffet, de Talhouët and Daru, received only tepid sympathy from the Left Center, which obeyed the dictates of M. Thiers. It remained for him to prove the disloyalty of the Right Center, his chief support, and until then his faithful legion.

He was soon enlightened on this point. The *Corps législatif* had been convened in the first instance for the 11th, but afterwards, at the request of M. Schneider, the earlier date of Tuesday, the 9th, was fixt.

It will be seen what an error had been committed, at the time of the Emperor's departure, in restricting the power of the Regent within such narrow limits, and those chiefly responsible for laying down these limits were afterwards the first to advise her to transcend them. She had, indeed, gone beyond them when she had proclaimed a state of

martial law, and she did so again when she summoned urgently the *Corps législatif* without referring to the Emperor. She was now about to still further exceed her powers by forming a Cabinet.

"Your Majesty," I said, "is acting in a revolutionary manner."

"I must," she answered.

She was vexed at having to act in this manner, because she was always one of the greatest believers in legal methods, and she felt that her action had prepared the way for the unconstitutional proposals which were put forward during the following weeks. But she yielded to an imperious necessity. It is, however, necessary to observe that none of the acts of the Empress challenged the national will, but her usurpation of power, if one can so describe it, infringed only the prerogative of the Emperor. This was in some sense a domestic affair, a question between the wife and her husband.

Hardly had the *Corps législatif* reassembled than the three groups of this Chamber which were loyal to the dynasty each sent two deputies to the Empress, begging her to form a new Ministry. I only remember the names of two of these six ambassadors, simply because they happened to take opposite views as regards the appointment of General Trochu. These gentlemen were M. de Dalmas and M. Dugué de la Fauconnerie. But all were unanimous as to the desirability of dismissing Emile Ollivier.

"I have not the right," answered the Empress, "to dismiss the Ministry; but, in view of the urgency, I believe it will be my duty to replace the Ministry if you upset it."

Indeed, in the circumstances in which we found our-

selves, it seemed our duty to prepare the solution of a ministerial crisis before it took place. Government could not remain in abeyance even for twenty-four hours. So during August 7 and 8 there was a continual coming and going of politicians. From the very first hour, simply because she had spoken so nobly and firmly the words demanded by the situation, the Empress had become the center of everything, the soul of the defense and the real Head of the Government.

During the night of the 8th–9th, at about two in the morning, the Empress, who had been unable to sleep, sent for me, and discust with wonderful clearness of outlook the various courses she might adopt. How many fresh names had been suggested within the last forty-eight hours! How many combinations proposed, tried, rejected, re-considered, and again thrown aside! M. Haussmann had been suggested. The Right would not hear of it. It was proposed to place Girardin in the Cabinet, but only on condition that he held no responsible post. But he insisted on the Home Office. Nothing to be done with him! Trochu, who with Bazaine was the hero of the moment, had been sounded, and declared himself willing to accept the post of Minister of War, if he were allowed to expose in a public speech the faults committed by the Higher Command. Were we then thus openly to confess our faults, to lay bare our discords and our weaknesses to the armed invader now in our own territory, who would hasten to profit by such confessions? Even those who had put forward Trochu's name had not insisted.

The name of General de Palikao was then remembered. Palikao, the victor of Peking, once the butt of the newspapers when he was a favorite at the Court, was now almost forgotten in his command at Lyons, but he enjoyed

a semi-popularity on account of his being in semi-disgrace. He had been sent for in haste, and was already on his way to Paris as the Empress was speaking to me.

Our conversation lasted for some hours. By this time the Empress was literally worn out with fatigue, and her face was as white as her pillow. For three days she had not slept, and she had hardly eaten. I implored her to try and sleep, and she exprest a wish to see whether a dose of chloral would induce slumber. I suggested that instead of this drug she might test the virtue of a cup of broth. The Empress consented, and I left the room to give the necessary order to Mlle. Blanche, the maid who attended to this kind of requirements; but as I could not find her in the little passage behind Her Majesty's room, I determined, little as I knew of those regions, to fetch the cup of broth myself.

I skirted the Galerie de Diane, and descended to the basement by the staircase of the Pavillon de Flore. I found myself in an underground passage extending the whole length of the Tuileries and lit by innumerable lamps. But where were the kitchens? I had not the remotest idea, so I thought my best plan would be to follow the lines of the little railway which conveyed the dishes from the kitchens to the Imperial table. Galleries opened to the right and left of me, which under other conditions I should have been tempted to explore. Suddenly I bethought me of "the little Red Man" who appeared, so it was said, to the masters of this palace or the members of their household whenever some disaster was impending! Surely it was, indeed, a fitting time to show himself. But "the little Red Man" remained invisible, and during my long walk I saw no sign of a ghost or of any living soul. The kitchens were situated, I discovered eventually, under the Rue de

Rivoli, and in one I found a scullion asleep in a chair. I awoke him in the same manner that I had awakened Emile Ollivier, but he took it far less kindly. However, as soon as I had obtained what I sought I retraced my steps; but when I reached the Empress's bedroom, after a twenty-minutes' walk, the broth was stone cold and the Empress was sleeping peacefully.

CHAPTER VI

THE REGENCY (continued), August 7–September 4, 1870

THE Place de la Concorde was in a state of tumult on the day of the opening of Parliament, and military precautions were taken to protect the national representatives from popular violence. Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers, who was personally in charge of the arrangements for keeping order, was still in a somewhat sullen mood. The position did not please him, and two days later he sent in his resignation—a fatal resignation, since it led to the appointment of Trochu as Governor of Paris.

The Chamber opened at two o'clock with a few words from the Prime Minister, and if he had been hitherto able to cherish any doubts as to the feelings of the majority regarding himself, his experience at this moment must have settled them. The sitting was suspended, and resumed at five o'clock. Emile Ollivier announced that the Ministers had placed their resignations in the hands of the Empress Regent, who had instructed General Count de Palikao to form a Cabinet and that the General had accepted the duty. M. Ollivier added that, following the ordinary rule, the retiring Ministers would continue in their office until the nomination of their successors.

Without another word he left the Tribune, which had witnessed so many of his oratorical triumphs and which he was never again to ascend. The Chamber cheered him as if by courtesy; it was a polite farewell, but slightly cruel in its cold politeness. With a heavy heart I mused on the great things which Emile Ollivier had failed of accom-

plishing. His fall closed a chapter in the annals of the Second Empire which ought to have been one of the most glorious; a chapter which should have accurately defined and justified the Imperial régime in the eyes of history. Those will agree with me who believe, as I do, that the true significance of the Empire was to be found in its later liberal and democratic form.

But the rapid sequence of events carried us down the stream, and it was useless to look back. When General de Palikao appeared next day in the Tribune his first words were almost inaudible. "Speak louder!" cried the Left, insolently.

"Excuse me," said the General, smiling and without raising his voice, "I have here"—at the same time lifting his hand to his neck, which was encircled by a stiff black stock in the fashion of 1840—"I have here a bullet which has never been extracted, and which worries me a little in public speaking. But if you will take the trouble to listen, I assure you that you will hear me."

This little sentence contained a great lesson; it reminded the babblers that they had before them a man of action. The House understood and applauded.

The General then read the list of his colleagues. Henri Chevreau was Minister of the Interior; Clément Duvernois, Minister of Commerce; Jérôme David, Minister of Public Works; Magne received the portfolio of Finance; Brame that of Education; Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs; Grandperret took over the Seals. The Presidency of the State Council, which gave rank in the Cabinet, devolved upon Busson-Billault; Admiral Rigault de Genouilly remained at the Admiralty, and, naturally, Palikao took charge of the War Office in addition to the office of Prime

Minister. These names were well received, especially those of Magne and Brame.

The new Ministers set to work at once, and, if one judges politicians not according to their final successes, but according to the uprightness of their intentions and the immediate results, history ought, so it seems to me, to respect this Ministry of twenty-five days, whose activity was truly extraordinary, and without which the five months' resistance which followed would have been impossible. The loan of 500 millions, the compulsory circulation of bank-notes, the moratorium on bills of exchange, met the urgent financial requirements, and when Magne left the Ministry the Republic found two thousand million francs in their coffers.

All men from twenty-five to thirty-five were called up to serve in the *Garde Mobile*, and men from thirty-five to forty-five in the *Garde Nationale*. Special laws granted an allowance to families who now found themselves, on account of this calling up, deprived of their bread-winners. Thanks to these measures the Minister of War was able to create two new army corps, to the command of which Trochu and Vinoy were appointed; and with the fourth battalions from the depots he formed composite infantry regiments. The Minister of the Interior, assisted by his brother, Leon Chevreau, prefect of the department of the Oise, whom he had summoned to his aid, succeeded in three weeks in arming and equipping eighty new battalions of the National Guard, bringing the army of Paris to a total of 270,000 combatants. The inner ring of fortifications and the outlying forts received 1,800 pieces of heavy ordnance, of which a considerable number had been borrowed from the Navy. The Minister of Public Works gave orders for the breaking down of the bridges and the

locks and the blocking of the tunnels, in order to delay the passage of the siege artillery which the Prussians were bringing against Paris.

In view of the investment of the capital, Grandperret, the Keeper of the Seals, prepared to organize a second Government, which should establish its seat at Tours and was to include, besides himself, Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne, Brame, Magne and Busson-Billault. To Clément Duvernois was allotted the task of provisioning Paris. He caused 35,000 head of cattle and 280,000 sheep to be pastured in the Bois de Boulogne and in the Luxembourg Gardens. His successor, Magnin, one of the Ministers of the *Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale*, paid to him the following remarkable tribute: "All the living animals had been brought in under the administration of M. Clément Duvernois. I say 'all,' because the number of those brought in under my administration was very trifling. To him (which I loyally recognize) is due the honor, if honor there be, of having provisioned Paris."

Some years later Duvernois, one of the most active, adaptable and brilliant minds I have ever known, died miserably and broken-hearted, after leaving the *Maison Centrale* at Poissy, where, in consequence of speculation which ended disastrously, the justice of his country had sent him to make list slippers.

Far be it from me to credit the Empress with having initiated every act of her Ministers; but there are several measures that she herself suggested, or of which she hastened the accomplishment. As one special instance, I can cite the armament of the Paris forts with naval guns and the destruction of the locks. Her influence made itself felt in everything, and the desire shown by certain

of these men to merit her praise is astonishing. I said to her one day: "I begin to believe that the Salic law is quite wrong, because men will do more for you than they would do for the Emperor."

One day Henri Chevreau at the Ministry of the Interior, speaking to me of her, was so overcome by his feelings that he began to sob. Mérimée, who had known her so many years, and who never doubted her courage, was full of admiration. He wrote in glowing terms to Panizzi and to Mme. de Montijo: "She is firm as a rock!" And Trochu himself said, a little later: "That woman is a Roman!"

She occasionally received strange visitors. One day Admiral Jurien brought with him François Buloz, who had the air of a man brought against his will into a low haunt; another day it was Girardin. A certain ecclesiastical humbug also prowled round the Tuileries and found his way in on several occasions. He was a converted Jew and a more or less repentant rake, who finished as he had begun—by a scandal. But at that time he had the reputation of an apostle. With violet silk buttons on his cassock, he caused himself to be addrest as "Monseigneur," and I believe he tried to give us his benediction when we were not looking. He brought the consolations of religion to those who did not want them, and gave advice to those who would have none of it.

The Empress continued her course without turning to the right or left, uninfluenced either by the plaintive or the officious. She stuck to her two objects: to bring together men of goodwill in one common patriotic effort, and to raise up allies for France.

Overtures were made individually to the deputies of the Left. What was asked of them? Simply a truce to

suspend their anti-dynastic efforts, and to think of nothing but the national peril. These overtures were not welcomed. M. Jules Grévy was the only one who listened to this appeal to his patriotism and his conscience. That is why he was entirely put on one side later, and rested under suspicion during the period which immediately followed September 4. One searches vainly in history for a group of politicians equally malevolent, and equally furiously and implacably selfish, as the irreconcilables of 1870. Whilst accusing the Emperor of humiliating France before foreigners, they refused him the means of reorganizing the Army, which alone could have enabled him to speak boldly and to act vigorously. They clamored for war because it was popular, but they feared it because a victory would have restored the prestige of the Sovereign. They took courage again in August, when they saw the Government disarmed and three hundred thousand bayonets in the hands of the Parisian populace, and they resigned themselves placidly to the repeated defeats which carved out their own road to power. One may remember a sentence which appeared on January 1, 1871, in a well-known review: "In spite of the awful disasters which the year 1870 has brought upon us, yet, because it has seen the overthrow of the Empire, this year has not been entirely barren. There should be some gratitude mingled with our curses, and, in fact, when the accounts are balanced we may well bless it."

The writer of this sentence belonged to another party, and there was no necessity for him to voice this cynical display of evil sentiments; but it, nevertheless, reflected faithfully the outlook of the members of the Left. One of them remarked on September 4, with a triumphant air: "The Emperor and the Army are both caught in the same

cast of the net. Nothing is lacking!" They were not far from regarding Bismarck as a benefactor, and, in fact, it was Bismarck who gave the Republic to France, hoping that the gift would kill her.

One can quite understand that men who profest these sentiments remained deaf to the advances of the Empress. Monsieur Thiers was also sounded. He was found, however, to be equally ill-disposed, although he was careful not to commit himself to a single definite statement.

The Empress had re-started her negotiations, or I should say her conversations, with Prince Metternich, and these conversations were not very far, towards the middle of August, from leading to a practical result. In order to keep the Emperor well informed as to all that was said and done, and to explain her own acts, which might otherwise have appeared like a usurpation of power, the Empress thought of going to Metz, but at this moment the Emperor resigned the command to Marshal Bazaine, and left headquarters at Metz to return to Châlons; it was not possible to join him on the road. Besides, in Paris, the lull which had followed the nomination of the new Ministry had lasted only a few days, and the alarm of the 14th showed how necessary was the presence of the Empress in the capital.

On that day, towards four o'clock, a handful of men led by Blanqui and Eudes attacked the fire station at La Villette, and attempted to stir up the people to rebellion. This affray lasted only a few moments, and order was quickly restored. The hour apparently had not yet struck. The next day the deputies of the Left, when challenged on the subject by their colleagues of the Right, disavowed emphatically the rioters of La Villette. But their truthfulness may be gaged by the fact that on the even-

ing of September 4 their first care was to set Eudes free, and the next day he appeared at the Town Hall of the XVIIth *arrondissement* carrying an order signed Trochu.

From the 14th to the 17th there was a further respite, but on the night of the 17th we again experienced violent emotions; a message from Châlons announced to the Regent the imminent arrival of General Trochu, who had just been appointed Governor of Paris, and who was to "precede the Emperor by a few hours." The Emperor had, indeed, arrived on the 16th at Châlons, and had held a council of war with MacMahon and other officers, a council at which Prince Napoleon and Rouher were present. It was then decided that the Sovereign should return to the capital, and that the army of MacMahon should reorganize under the walls of Paris. Since then competent judges have held and demonstrated that, from the point of view of strategy, this resolution was the best that could have been adopted in the difficult circumstances; but at that time, and in our environment, quite a different view was taken. It was said that Paris armed, fortified and equipped, and full of enthusiasm and energy, would be quite able to defend itself. What public opinion demanded with violent insistence was that MacMahon should go to the assistance of Bazaine, who was already nearly surrounded, that Bazaine should be extricated, and that the two marshals together should then strike a great blow. The Minister of War lent to this plan all the strength of his authority. He also claimed the right to direct the military operations as a whole and to give orders to MacMahon.

On the other hand, the Minister of the Interior and the Prefect of Police had more than once exprest the well-founded opinion that the return of the Emperor to

Paris would be the signal for a sanguinary revolution. It is easy to see, then, that the Empress was quite upset on learning the decision from Châlons.

As for the nomination of General Trochu, she could not understand it. We learned later that it was chiefly the work of Prince Napoleon; Marshal MacMahon and Rouher told the Commission of Inquiry on the events of September 4 all that passed, and anyone who refers to their evidence will be enlightened as to the circumstances which led to and accompanied this deplorable resolution. However, as the nomination of General Trochu was an accomplished fact, one had to be prepared to receive him and to convert him if possible to the views of the Government. I went at once to find Pietri, who had gone to bed, and brought him back with me. He was appaled at what had happened, and at the consequences that he foresaw would result.

We found the Empress already in consultation with the new Governor. Henri Chevreau and Admiral Jurien were also present. This meeting was long, agitated, more or less incoherent, and interspersed with burlesque episodes.

The Admiral, who was devoted body and soul to the Empress, but who at the same time was an old comrade of the General's, wished literally to thrust them into each other's arms. "Embrace him, Madame," he cried; "he is an honest fellow!" The General smiled, stiffened a little, biting his moustache, feeling doubtless a trifle embarrassed. The Empress neither agreed nor refused. She knew that these kinds of actions are useful sometimes with a crowd, but she did not see the necessity of such a pantomime in the midst of a grave and important discussion, before three or four witnesses who knew the inward mean-

ing of the whole business and the personal feelings at the back of it. So finally there was no embracing.

This comic incident was succeeded by a serious discussion which rose to tragic heights. Must the return of the Emperor and the army be prevented? Trochu defended the double measure which he had helped to decide. The Empress and her counselors pleaded on the opposite side, and she said: "Do you know, General, that fifty armed men could come straight into this room and murder me without any difficulty? But they do not attack me. Why? Simply because I do not defend myself, and because they know that if I disappeared the Empire would still remain. But imagine the Emperor in this palace, which is the trap in which Sovereigns are caught. What would happen to him? Imagine the onslaught of all the bitter enemies who are now combined against him. There would be two alternatives: either the Army would side with him, and then there would be civil war between the Army and the armed people of Paris; or else the troops would desert him, and revolution and massacre would follow. In either case who will be the gainers? The Prussians." The General yielded. "Yes," he admitted, "the Emperor cannot enter Paris, but the strategic movement indicated by MacMahon must follow its course." "Then where will the Emperor go?" It was, indeed, a puzzling problem. This man who had been the absolute master of France, who had vanquished Russia and Austria, who had made Italy, and who less than three weeks earlier was still the most powerful Sovereign of the world, had no longer any place among the people that he had governed. He had left Metz, so as not to embarrass Bazaine; MacMahon wished to send him back to Paris, and Paris threw him back on MacMahon like a shuttlecock on a racquet. If he

were to keep away from his second army, as he had from his first one, and at the same time was forbidden to enter his capital, where was he to go?

When the new Governor had left us I had the cruel task of drawing up the message addrest to the Emperor by the Regent. She had given me a kind of rough draft, which I materially softened; I could have wished to do much more. I should have liked the dispatch to have been simply an account of the situation, which threw the onus of responsibility on to the Minister of War, the Minister of the Interior, the Prefect of Police, and the others, for the advice they had given, and which would have left the Sovereign a free agent.

"Do you think," said the Empress, "that I am not the first to feel all that is horrible in his position? But the message that you propose to send would not stop him, and he is lost if we do not stop him."[1]

The Empress has been much criticized for having influenced in this manner the Emperor's decisions, and thus, indirectly, the conduct of the military operations. Some have gone so far as to impute to her all the subsequent misfortunes.

One forgets that the Empress actually did nothing but transmit to the Sovereign, as was her duty, the opinion of the Ministers. When, however, she endorsed that opinion with so much emphasis, she took upon herself, with her usual courage and generosity, a heavy responsibility, which, constitutionally, did not rest with her, and which a little care in wording might easily have avoided. She sheltered the men who ought to have sheltered her, and who were happy to be able to take refuge behind her.

[1] The message in question is not the telegram sent at once to Châlons and drawn up in the presence of General Trochu, but the explanatory letter which followed.

Those who judge her severely because she prevented the Emperor from reentering Paris, and who accuse her of having brought about the disaster of Sedan, ought in justice to ask themselves if another catastrophe would not have been the result of a contrary resolution? What letters of blood would have covered that unwritten page of our history which described, under the date of August 17, the return of the Sovereign into the midst of a people maddened with exasperation and bitterness and athirst for vengeance? And, on the other hand, one may well ask what might have come of MacMahon's march to the north if it had been conducted by a commander more daring and more resourceful than the one who had never even attempted to hold the impregnable rampart of the Vosges.

At the same time, even if we admit that the march to the north was a grave fault, the fault was not irreparable, and need not have led to a capitulation, if MacMahon, on reaching Stenay, had been authorized to take the Mézières road.

The War Minister enjoined him peremptorily to march on Sedan, and this time the Regent, whatever may have been her personal opinion, made no comment. Would to God that she had been equally reserved on the 17th of August!

Comparative calm reigned in Paris during the days that followed. Everything had been conceded to popular feeling. The Emperor had effaced himself in favor of Bazaine; Trochu, the other public favorite, was in power in Paris, as a kind of dictator. The capitol was stript of troops, and the whole population was about to be armed. The *Mobiles* from Paris, on being sent into camp at Châlons, had merely to mutiny and insult their general in order to get their own way. "I am bringing you back

with me to Paris," said Trochu to them, "to fight there, *as is your right.*"[1]

No one seemed to realize that we lived under martial law. The Governor—the highest military authority in Paris—wrote a letter to *Le Temps*, in which he declared that he would only use "moral force"; this amounted to telling the extremists that they could go to any lengths, and that the Government was defenseless before them.

Instead of effacing themselves before the military power, the Legislature seemed ready to encroach on the domain of the Executive, and to assume the airs of a Convention. Latour-Dumoulin wished the Assembly to assume the Imperial Prerogative, depose Palikao, and replace him by Trochu. Jules Favre clamored for a kind of Committee of Public Safety, on the plea that it was necessary to enforce the new laws. And when, on August 19, a decree of the Empress instituted, under the presidency of General Trochu, the committee for the defense of the fortifications of Paris, exclusively composed of military men and specialists, the Left proposed to add to them nine deputies. This would have given the committee a marked political character, and would, in fact, have constituted a second Government outside—and above—the legal one. The Ministry refused this, and put it to a vote of confidence. They obtained a considerable majority, but this apparent victory had been bought by a previous arrangement, under which three deputies and one senator were to be nominated on the committee. M. Thiers was an obvious person to be put on this committee, but once again he tried to shuffle out of it. He was hesitating, torn

[1] What would have been said if the *Mobiles* of the other departments had claimed the same privilege? Far from recognizing this pretended "right," a law was passed authorizing the Government to draft them into the regiments of the first line army.

between the desire to keep his reviving popularity in reserve for better times and less formidable responsibilities, and the almost irresistible temptation he felt to meddle in military matters and to tamper with the Army. At first he said "No," but he seized the first opportunity to alter his decision. When Henri Chavreau announced the march of the Crown Prince of Prussia and his army on Paris, Thiers declared that under the circumstances no citizen could refuse his help to the Government. He was at once nominated a member of the committee. His influence was equally preponderant there as it was in the Chamber. He held the majority in his hands, and he believed himself, up to the last moment, to be the arbiter of the parliamentary situation.

But if M. Thiers was all-powerful at the Palais Bourbon, General Trochu was the idol of the Parisians. I would willingly remain silent concerning this strange man, whom I am by no means sure I understand properly. His fine military record (previous to the revolutionary period), his great talents, his rare virtues, impress me, in spite of myself, with respect, and in the long voluntary retirement in which his life drew to a close I am forced to render him homage. Yes, I would fain leave him in peace in that grave into which he descended with so much dignity and simplicity. But how can it be done? By what means can I relate the events of September 4 without mentioning this man, who not only submitted to and completed the revolution, but actually commenced it, as we shall presently see, and who, while able to prevent it, rendered it inevitable?

At any rate, why not admit it? Trochu, with all his contradictions, is an historical problem, which attracts and perplexes, an enigma, that we, his contemporaries, have

not been able to decipher—one which will even baffle the historian when the hour for the historian strikes, and I believe the hour has struck now, since we, who knew these men personally and were eye-witnesses of these events, are about to disappear.

How could this man, so honest and spotless in his daily life, a man who seemed a veritable saint, eager for self-sacrifice, how could such a one unhesitatingly and remorselessly violate his most sacred promises? Again, how could this ambitious and incorrigible talker decide to quit the political world and endure thirty years of self-inflicted silence and obscurity? Possibly an explanation may be forthcoming some day. All I can say is that in August, 1870, we wondered what sort of man we had to deal with in him—was he a buffoon or a tribune, a hero or a traitor? The Empire fell, and still we were no wiser. We spoke smilingly of a legendary plan of defense said to have been placed by him in the keeping of a notary, and I really believe that, in the universal anxiety to clutch at any straw, many Parisians imagined that salvation was really hidden in some sealed docket in Maître Ducoux's safe. Nearly every day the Cabinet was confronted with some fresh outburst of this fantastic in uniform—*sorties* as ill-timed and unsuccessful as those made later by the garrison of Paris.

One day he would begin thus: "Madame, I have an income of a hundred francs and eleven children." (He was speaking of his brother's children, whom he had adopted, and whom he brought up most strictly; but he succeeded in throwing ridicule on this fine action, and the eleven children—recalling some recent music-hall joke—convulsed everyone.) "I need money for my equipment," he continued. "I must have twenty thousand francs—that is to say, a year's salary; for I will not hear of accept-

ing one of those scandalous salaries of which the Empire has given a sad example." The Minister of War stopt his dissertation. "General, go to the Treasury and take what you require. You have no need to consult the Regent about a question of pay." Another day he thought fit to recite to the council a speech that he had just delivered to the National Guards. In this he had exhorted them to die well, and to maintain "in the supreme agony that tragically proud attitude which alike became men, citizens and soldiers." This time it was the Empress who interrupted him. "*Mon Dieu!* General," said she, "one dies as one can!" But these lessons were lost on him; common sense, irony, insult never affected him. I still seem to see him, an upright figure, tightly buttoned into his uniform, but fidgety and agitated in his demeanor, his proud, refined expression, his large bald head, his comprest lips, his eyes, ever shifting, full of fire, the eyes of a visionary. One felt him to be a mixture of incompatibles, a man whom everything hurt and yet whom nothing turned; one almost morbidly touchy, yet invincibly obstinate, admirably intelligent in his own ideas, but thoroughly impervious to those of others.

The Ministers became uneasy when they saw the representative of the Army, the man who wielded the formidable powers of martial law, laying down his arms, so to speak, before the revolution and appealing to "moral force." Clément Duvernois prest Trochu to explain himself on this point. "Then, General," he said, "if the Regent were attacked, what would you do?" The General replied: "I should lay down my life on the steps of the throne." His relations with the members of the Left during this second fortnight of August have been at one time a matter of controversy. It had been arranged

that these relations should be positively denied, so as to give the conversion of the general to the Republic at three o'clock on the afternoon of the Fourth of September the character of a spontaneous act, free from all premeditation, a providential inspiration, or, simply, an acceptance of the inevitable. Hence the tissue of pitiable and contradictory untruths which make one blush for those who fell so low as to invent them. Ernest Picard affirmed, "I never saw General Trochu before I met him at the Hotel de Ville on the Fourth of September." "Take care what you are saying, my dear colleague," interrupted the Marquis d'Andellarre, "*I saw you at his house.*" The fat fellow, quite unperturbed, answered with that good natured effrontery which used to be appreciated in those days, "Since you know it I won't conceal it from you." Jules Favre has told later of his interview with the Governor of Paris on August 21. As for us, we heard edifying tales. "Madame," said the general to her Majesty, "if your police are really efficient they will have told you that I have seen the Deputies of the Left. . . . It is quite true, as I feel that my duty is to keep in touch with public opinion." He took this opportunity of affirming once more his devotion to the person of the Sovereign and his firm intention of defending her. To be quite honest, I will add that she placed no reliance on this devotion, and the sequel has proved that she was right.

Whilst following or inspiring the acts of her ministers, the Regent reserved to herself certain duties which seemed peculiarly suitable to her. She gave singularly businesslike orders for the removal to Brest of certain priceless treasures of our museums and other items of our national collections. She inspected the military hospitals, and her visit to the Val-de-Grâce was the occasion of

several touching episodes of which she told me. I remember, among others, the case of a poor *Turco*[1] whose rifle had been taken away when they amputated his arm and who regretted the lost weapon much more than the vanished limb. The Empress obtained (or promised, I forget which) the return of the rifle, and she was moved to tears when she described the joy which had illumined the face of the poor mutilated soldier. Not content with visiting the hospitals, she had one established on the Terrace of the Tuileries, and another inside the palace in the memorable hall where the Convention used to sit. This hall lay between the staircase of the Pavillon de Marsan and the vestibule of the chapel, and in 1867 a grand banquet had been given there to some foreign Sovereigns, of which the magnificence, chronicled by all the papers of the time, has been preserved by a very interesting and accurate painting now at Farnborough. But all the decorations previously arranged for the *fête* had now disappeared, and the walls had again resumed their chilling bareness when I saw them for the first time. In 1868 and 1869 I had my private apartment in the Pavillon de Marsan, and many times a day I crossed this hall on a narrow bridge, along the window side towards the Place du Carrousel. At night a single lamp illumined this huge deserted hall, peopled with terrible memories. These I would often muse over as I stopt at the spot once occupied by the chair of the president, where Boissy d'Anglas had saluted the bleeding head of Féraud, and where Thuriot had listened impassively to the outbursts of Robespierre at bay: "President of assassins, once more I ask your ear!" I saw in imagination the "Mountain," the "Plain," the "Marsh," and the crowded tribunes; I

[1] Algerian Native Infantry (Translator's Note).

fancied I could hear the shrieking clamor of the "tricoteuses" and the drums of the "sections" hastening to the attack or to the rescue of the Assembly; and I would call up one or other of the acts of the mighty drama of which this sinister hall has been the scene. But the last time I was there its appearance had once more changed. Thirty beds, many of which were already occupied, replaced the phantoms of the past, and the Empress flitted from one to the other, surrounded by the good Sisters of Charity in white aprons, who were the last occupants of this hall.

It was on the 23d that MacMahon began that march towards the north, from which he expected no good, but on which the Parisians and ourselves had built all kinds of wild hopes. The 25th or 26th at the earliest, but surely the 27th and 28th would see, so we believed, despite all probability, the junction of the two armies. One afternoon in that week I happened to go to the Luxembourg on some urgent business, and on the staircase I came face to face with the senators who were leaving the meeting. Many came up to me and surrounded me, asking for confirmation of the current rumor, and as I sadly shook my head, "Yes! yes!" cried several, "it is absolutely true, *Ils se donnent la main*, they have joined hands." This was on the lips of all. I knew only too well that nothing could be more false, and that as yet it was impossible for the two marshals to be in touch with one another. However, M. Franceschini Pietri's dispatches left me some room for hope up to the 30th, but that night towards midnight a telegram arrived which announced the defeat of De Failly's Corps and the mutiny of part of his troops.

I thought it useless to awaken the Empress, who was very tired and ill, so I kept this disastrous news to myself

all night, still hoping that another telegram would follow, correcting or at any rate modifying this first depressing news. And, indeed, at seven in the morning of the 31st a second dispatch told me that the troops had rallied and returned to their duty. These two dispatches ought to have arrived almost at the same time, this was evident from the context. This fact, joined to some others, caused me to suspect the fidelity of the employees of our telegraphic bureau. I became almost certain that the telegrams—more or less accurately deciphered—had gone to the Rue de la Sourdière (the general headquarters of the Revolutionary Party) before being delivered to me. I mentioned my belief to Conti, the Emperor's chief secretary, who had just come back to Paris, but whose state of health prevented him doing much active work.

I went at once to the telegraphic bureau and told the employees that if I once put my hand on the author of the leakage, he would appear two hours after before a court-martial! A few sneered, but one man turned very pale. From that moment I became an object of spite to those scoundrels; and, circumstances aiding, their revenge was not longed delayed.

No communication from the Imperial Headquarters arrived during the fatal days of September 1 and 2, which dragged their hopeless length regardless of our mortal anxiety, which increased as the total absence of news became, hour by hour, ever more significant of disaster.

The Empress was consumed with anxiety for the Emperor and for the Army; she also worried greatly about her son, who at this time was wandering from town to town on the north-eastern frontier, accompanied by some devoted officers and a mere handful of *Cent Gardes*.[1] A

[1] The name given to the Emperor's mounted Body Guard (Translator's Note).

private letter from Avesnes, dated August 30 (it emanated from a journalist devoted to the Empire), had informed us of the sentiments of the people there. The aides-de-camp of the Prince were receiving different, if not contradictory, orders from the Emperor and from the Empress; they did not know what to do and the responsibility frightened them. They feared, above all things, being suddenly surrounded in some small fortified place by the Prussians; this would have cut them off from information about events and have deprived the Prince of his personal liberty and freedom of action. The Empress could not see the force of this argument; here is a very characteristic letter which she wrote to Charles Duperré, the oldest and highest in rank of the aides-de-camp, and who in consequence was in a position of authority in the Prince's entourage: "I am not in favor of these wanderings from town to town. You must remain where you are. If the town were taken, it would be time to hide him you guard and take him out secretly. If Avesnes is impossible, go to Laon, which is a fortified place and in the theater of war. You have a duty more pressing than that of security; it is that of honor, and I feel that this retreat to Amiens is unworthy of him and of us. Each one of us must carry out to the limit of his power the hard duties which are imposed on us. My heart is torn but resolute. I have had no news of my husband or of you since yesterday. I am in terrible anxiety, but I wish above all things that each of you should do his duty. Always remember one thing: I can weep for my son dead or wounded, but to think of him fleeing! I could never forgive you if you allowed such a thing to happen. I appeal to your honor as soldiers. Do everything for the best, but act like soldiers. I will exonerate you and take all responsibility.

We shall hold out in Paris, if we are besieged, or if we are out of Paris we shall still hold out to the end. There can be no question of peace!—E."

This letter was never sent because Commander Duperré came in person to Paris on September 2 to discuss the situation with the Regent and to receive her orders. We therefore arranged (to meet the most urgent needs) a cipher which only contained forty words, and of which he carried off a copy identical with mine. He left Paris, if I remember correctly, on the morning of the 3d, and I never saw him again until we met in our common exile.[1]

The same morning witnessed the historic visit of Mérimée to Thiers, about which I have already tried to enlighten the public. But it seems that hitherto I have only half succeeded, since I have apparently failed to convince some talented and sincere writers who have occupied themselves with these events. I must therefore return to it, for the solution of this point in history touches the honor of the Regent.

M. Thiers told the Commission of Inquiry that Mérimée presented himself before him with a mission from the Empress. According to M. Thiers' account, Mérimée came with two motives—one to appeal to his pity, and the other to excite his ambition by putting before him the prospect of such unlimited power as he might gain under the Regency of a woman, with a Prince who was a minor and a Sovereign who was a prisoner, whose throne was already morally forfeit, and whose abdication seemed to be a foregone conclusion. M. Thiers had then protested his respectful sympathy "towards a great and unhappy Princess," but he had finally

[1] All the facts relative to the movements of the Prince during the last days of the Empire have been related with equal accuracy and conscientiousness by M. R. Minon in his interesting pamphlet on this subject.

declared "that *after Sedan* there was nothing more to be done." Seeing that he could not move him, the plenipotentiary of the Regent had retired, and in the course of the same day he had communicated to M. Thiers the thanks of the Regent for the sympathy which he had exprest.

It is my duty to repeat and assert emphatically, in spite of all affirmations to the contrary, that this statement does not contain one word of truth. In the first place, the Empress did not entrust Mérimée with any mission for M. Thiers. In the second place, she cannot have asked Mérimée, whom she had not seen since August 25, to thank M. Thiers for a sympathy which had never been conveyed to her. In the third place, there cannot possibly have been any mention of Sedan in their interview, since the capitulation was not known to any of us at that time.

On the first point I have never had any doubt. What would have been the use of such a mission, since the Empress had long been well aware of M. Thiers' attitude? But in order to prove my words here is the personal and distinct evidence of the Empress herself. When she first read the extraordinary evidence of M. Thiers, she wrote these lines, "I never saw M. Mérimée after August 25. If he went to see M. Thiers it was on his own initiative and out of friendship for me." Yes, this step of Mérimée's was absolutely spontaneous, it was dictated by a devotion of forty years, and by the supreme illusions that he retained concerning the generosity of his old friend. This explanation must seem obvious to those who know how often in these latter years Mérimée had sounded, had advised and had talked to M. Thiers in much the same way without having been encouraged or authorized to do so by

anyone. One may even go so far as to say that the "conversion" of Thiers was Mérimée's last dream.

But, after all, this is a minor matter. The fundamental false assertion which is the plain outcome of M. Thiers' evidence, if one takes it seriously, and to which I must oppose an emphatic denial, consists in the statement that the Empress and her circle knew of the capitulation of Sedan on the evening of September 2. M. Thiers relates that during the sitting of the Committee of Defense *à propos* of some incident in the discussion, M. Jérôme David, Minister of Public Works, approached him and whispered in his ear, "Do not insist upon this, M. Thiers, there is important news"; further, that after the sitting M. Thiers and M. David went out on the Seine Embankment and walked for some considerable time to and fro between the Solferino Bridge and that of the Concorde, during which period M. Jérôme David informed M. Thiers of the capitulation of Sedan, and they discust the consequences.

M. Étienne Lamy has thought fit to adopt M. Thiers' version of this incident, supporting it by the evidence of M. Lara-Minot, some time chief secretary to M. Jérôme David. Up to this time I have always considered M. David as a high principled man. I should deeply regret to believe that he was really guilty of the crime attributed to him by his ex-secretary. For it would most assuredly have been criminal if, knowing the news of the capitulation on September 2 at 11 o'clock at night, he had communicated it to M. Thiers but hidden it from the Government of which he formed part. Such an action would have been unpardonable, and, besides, inexplicable. If, on the other hand, he possest this secret information in common with the Empress and the Ministry, they are all equally re-

sponsible to history for the silence which was maintained for twenty-four hours and for the ignorance in which they left the public.

The real truth is, that the Empress knew nothing of the capitulation on the evening of the 2d or on the morning of the 3d, and she knew nothing when I left her at two o'clock on the 3d to go to the *Corps législatif*.[1] When, then, did she learn of the capitulation of Sedan? She has recorded in a second manuscript note which she wrote after receiving M. Thiers' evidence, "Received dispatch from Sedan September 3 about five o'clock in the evening. M. Chevreau, the Minister of the Interior, first handed it to me and then went to take it to General Trochu."

I can corroborate her testimony by adding mine to it, and I think it will be easily understood without my insisting upon it, how the smallest details of place, time and circumstances are fixt in my memory.

It was in the court of the *Corps législatif* towards three o'clock in the afternoon that I first heard of the disaster and of the telegram which had announced it to the Deputies of the opposition. My friend Gaston Jollivet and another journalist named Édouard Bouscatel, until then unknown to me, told me about it, and they conducted me to a group in the midst of which Ranc, who had seen and learnt the telegram by heart, was giving an account of it to any who cared to listen. When I reentered the Tuileries the council was sitting. I spoke a few words with M. de Brimont, son-in-law and aide-de-camp to the War Minister; then I went to the Empress's study. There I found Conti, who had also heard the news. He was shivering with fever and was seated on the ground, with

[1] I was present each day at the sitting to render an account of it to her.

his back to the chimney where I lighted the fire. Conti was a poet, a scholar, a man of the old school, and besides he had moral courage, as he proved some months later when, being almost dying, in the midst of a furious crowd he found strength to cling to the rostrum and speak up for the rights of his Imperial master.

Now in a sort of prophetic vision of coming conflict he was struggling against physical and moral pain, murmuring that line of Horace so often quoted but which perhaps has never been repeated with more fervor or with more faith:

"*Justem et tenacem propositi virum*" . . .

As he pronounced the last words of the stanza, the Empress appeared at the head of the little winding staircase which connected the Emperor's apartments with her own. We rose hurriedly and went towards her. At once we saw that she knew all. She was pale and terrible, her eyes were hard and brilliant with anger, her face distorted by emotion. She cried out, "Do you know what they are saying? That the Emperor has surrendered, that he has capitulated! You do not, surely, believe this abomination?"

Appalled by her anger we kept silence, but she repeated with unheard-of vehemence in tones almost threatening: "You do not believe it?"

"Madame," stammered Conti, "there are circumstances where the bravest" . . . But without waiting to hear more the Empress cut short his words, and her soul, stirred to its innermost depths, poured forth its agony in a torrent of incoherent and mad words. What she said then Conti never repeated to anyone, and I shall die, like him, without repeating it.

Whatever she may have thought in that first awful moment she did not think long, and when she realized all

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that the Emperor had suffered, not only did she give him back her respect, but—like the true woman she was—she gave him back the love which she had withheld from him for six years. Personally I must confess that I remember nothing of this tragic scene but the sound of words. I was so overcome at the time that my memory was as if paralyzed. I know, however, that it lasted five long, terrible minutes. The Empress then left the room and went down the little staircase. We remained speechless and stunned, like men who have come through an earthquake.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOURTH OF SEPTEMBER

IT was past eight o'clock when the council broke up. The Empress did not appear at dinner, and I saw her only for an instant. She seemed weighed down and crusht with anxiety—in fact, in a stupor. She hardly spoke.

All I knew was that she had sent for General Trochu, and that he, on the pretext of great fatigue following a long inspection of the forts, had refused to obey her order and promised to come the next morning.

I also learnt that M. Schneider, president of the Chamber, had promised the Empress with tears in his eyes (it was from the Empress that I learnt this detail) that he would not have an all night sitting.

At nine o'clock the Empress retired to her rooms. The officers and ladies-in-waiting also retired. I worked for some time in the study where M. de Lézay-Marnésia joined me. He had ordered two folding beds to be made up in the First Consul's room for himself and for me. We threw ourselves on them fully drest towards midnight. The door of those apartments which opened at the top of the grand staircase and which gave access to the ushers' room had been shut and locked under my eyes. The drawing-rooms were quite empty, and after eleven o'clock no one came in.

I have heard and read extraordinary accounts of the things that were said and done in the Tuileries that night.

To my own knowledge eight persons whom I could

name asserted that they had come there and had been received by various members of the household. Two of these people had had a long conference with the Empress at two o'clock in the morning. It is, of course, possible that a man who knew the Tuileries by heart could come to the door of the Empress's bedroom by the little back stairs, send a message by the lady's-maid to the Regent and thus obtain an audience from the Sovereign. It is equally possible and even probable that several officers of the household passed the night in the rooms on the ground floor and were thus able to receive visitors.

All I can say is that M. de Marnésia and I heard nothing and saw no one, and nothing disturbed this terrible night-watch except the distant tumult outside—the harbinger of revolution.

There was little sleep in Paris that night. All the enemies of the Empire were up and preparing themselves for the final assault.

The Governor of Paris was already in open rebellion. He had refused to come at the Empress's request, and he had likewise disobeyed the order of his chief, the Minister of War, who had ordered him to come at once.

He had, on his own authority, summoned to Paris General Leflô, one of the men of '48, who constantly showed his ardent republicanism by his words, and who desired nothing better than to confirm it by his actions.

He received some rioters who came to complain of the action of the police, and he sent them away with these words, "Be easy, the people will soon be their own police!"

He entrusted M. Steenackers, a Deputy of the Left, with an order to the National Guards of Neuilly to assemble the next morning on the Place de la Concorde,

and the newspaper *Le Siécle* (his mouthpiece) elaborated this into an order for all the Parisian battalions to meet at the same place.

On his side, M. Schneider returned to the Presidential residence and hastened, in spite of his tearful promises, to send a house to house summons to all the Deputies for the night sitting, which opened at midnight.

The ministerial bench was empty; the Ministers by their absence protested against the violation of the undertaking given. Jules Favre boldly proposed dethronement, and M. Pinard opposed him with much courage and eloquence. M. Thiers, who was still flattering himself that he could dominate the situation, took away Jules Favre in his carriage, explaining to him that the majority wanted the substance of abdication without the form. These scruples were a cowardly sham, which did not deserve to be taken seriously and which sealed the fate of that Assembly! The rest of the night passed in preparing banners on which were inscribed with consummate impudence the numbers of the vote that they counted on obtaining from a weak and discredited Parliament—185 out of 200! M. de Kératry organized to the best of his ability the outbreak for the next day, but as one has already seen, General Trochu had left him very little to do.

From midnight to two in the morning huge crowds moved about on the Place de la Concorde and in the Rue de Rivoli, crying aloud for "deposition!" In the center of this Paris, so full of lights and movement that one could hardly tell whether it was the scene of revolution or rejoicing, the great palace between the closed garden and the deserted court remained black and mournful, with its windows all dark, like an isle of shadow and silence in the midst of a sea of fire.

Several times I opened the French window which led from the ladies' drawing-room on to a little balcony, and from which I could see the whole garden of the Tuileries; I listened to the mysterious clamor which floated through the night, a clamor so menacing that at times one could not but think that the final assault was near at hand.

At last things became quieter, and when dawn began to show itself above the innumerable chimneys rising above the roofs of the Rue de Rivoli, silence had settled around us. It was a delightful summer morning, fresh and pure. Instead of the frantic cries of "deposition!" I heard the continual twittering of birds in the big chestnuts which began dimly to show themselves bathed in a bluish mist.

It seemed to me that I must have dreamt; that those cries, that tumult, were only a feverish nightmare, and that the dawn of a new day would find us all reconciled and working in common for the salvation of our country; but man pays no heed to the lessons taught him by the serene and pacific activities of nature; a soft and glorious summer morning is as suitable for a revolution as a tempestuous night, and the dawn which rose over the besieged Tuileries on August 10, 1792, may well have been as peaceful and as pure.

This comparison passed through my mind, and knowing that we were absolutely without means of defense, I asked myself if the end of the day would find the last Sovereign of France still living!

At seven o'clock the Empress was up. At seven-thirty she heard Mass in her oratory. Five or six persons only were present at this Mass—Mme. Aguado, Mme. Lebreton, Admiral Jurien, Eugène Conneau and the ladies' maids. We knelt on the floor in deep and earnest meditation, the women weeping silently.

After Mass I approached the Regent and ventured to say, "Madame, there is nothing more to be done in Paris. You must leave this hell, transport your Government to some town on the Loire and call around you the *Corps législatif*.[1] I will go and fetch the Prince from the north and bring him to your Majesty."

"That would mean civil war," the Empress replied. "The strength of our resistance against the Prussians would be broken in half—and for what end? he who has not Paris has nothing. No, I shall not move from here."

"Your Majesty, then, will defend yourself?"

"I shall not move, but I will not allow a shot to be fired."

What was it that she meant to do?

Perhaps her idea was to combat the insurrection with the strength of her own personal courage—to challenge, as it were, the Parisians to commit on her a cowardly crime which would stain their annals for ever, and to sway them by the wonderful magic that had for the last month made all her followers enthusiastic and almost fanatical in her service.

She had said to me a few days before: "If they will not have me any longer as Empress, I shall ask them to keep me as a hospital nurse."[2]

At this moment a message was brought from M. de

[1] This was exactly the advice brought by M. Stephen Liégeard before the night sitting in his own name and that of a certain number of his colleagues. He had suggested Blois and the castle recently presented by the town to the Prince Imperial. I did not know of this step of M. Liégeard's which coincided so well with my own feelings.

[2] Later, in exile, when speaking of that day, the Empress said, "I had no fear of death. What I feared was falling into the hands of ruffians or vixens who would add some shameful or ridiculous episode, who would have tried to dishonor as well as murder me. I imagined nameless indignities and I heard ferocious laughter—for, mind you, *les 'tricoteuses'* have left descendants."

Lesseps to the Empress. He told me himself that day that he had gone at six o'clock to waken his friend Girardin and that he had found him shaving. "Émile," he said, "they are going to make a revolution." Girardin replied simply, "You see, I am already shaved"; upon which they had tried to think of some way of salvation and they had come to submit it to the Empress.

Their advice amounted to this: "Resign all your powers into the hands of the *Corps législatif*." A Council of Regency would then be formed quite independent of the Empress, but de Lesseps was persuaded that if she showed an inclination to retire they would entreat her to stop.[1] But the Empress flatly refused to discuss this idea. "One can only," she said, "give up that which is one's own, but never that which one has received in trust—the Sovereignty is not mine to give—I shall never abdicate."

The Council of Ministers met again at eight o'clock. One of its members, Clément Duvernois, proposed that they should use the powers of martial law, arrest the leaders of the Left and terrorize the revolutionary party by severe measures.

He forgot that to employ force the first necessary condition is to have it in your own hands. From his seat he could have easily counted the defenders of the Tuileries, all whom we would count on to oppose the 300,000 Parisian bayonets—in the private garden were three companies of Light Infantry, in the courtyard were two companies of Grenadiers and a squadron of Cuirassiers.

[1] He has since assured me that Barthélemy St. Hilaire confirmed him in this idea.

"We desired nothing more than to keep the Empress with us," said the secretary of M. Thiers' government.

I can only say that this contradicts all that we know of the feelings of Thiers and his evidence before the Commission of Inquiry.

Moreover, General Mellinet was by no means certain that these troops would obey the command if he ordered them to fire.

No one stopt to consider the proposition of Duvernois, and it was decided to submit to the *Corps législatif* the idea of creating a Council of Regency armed with absolute powers, as in the plan of Girardin and Lesseps, but in this ministerial project it was necessary that the Empress should preside over this council.

There was no possible hope that such a project would be accepted by the Assembly. For its success it would have been essential that M. Thiers should support it, and that the *Corps législatif* should be sheltered from popular violence. We knew that neither condition could be fulfilled.

During the council I had to send a telegram to Charles Duperré by order of the Empress. The Prince was now at Maubeuge, and his aides-de-camp received contradictory orders from Paris and from Bouillon, to which place the Emperor had been taken. Here is the text of the telegram, in which only a few of the words were in cipher according to the private code I had drawn up two days previously.

"Received your two telegrams; you shall have verbal instructions before this evening and a letter from me by the man you have sent. The Empress wishes you to take no notice of the communications from Bouillon. The Emperor cannot appreciate the situation.—Filon."

The officers and ladies of the household who were in Paris at the time were now arriving. They did not come to offer advice, but to show their devotion by their presence and share the perils of their Sovereign. The rooms on the ground floor and those on the first floor were

quickly filled, and the occupants only left after the departure of the Empress.

I wish to call attention to this fact which is so honorable to those who were faithful to the last hour. I need not defend the charges of foolishness and corruption which have been so lightly cast at that Court where one met men of sterling worth and women of exalted virtue, but it is my duty to state here how this Court behaved in the day of trouble.

Lord Rosebery rightly notices the appalling manner in which Napoleon I and his family were deserted when the hour of final disaster came, and he contrasts this isolation with the eagerness of the French nobility to honor the fallen Bourbons and offer themselves as a rampart to their Princes against danger and as a retinue to them in their exile.

The fall of the second Empire does not justify a similar parallel. On September 4 the old and new nobility whom Napoleon III had gathered around him were very largely and worthily represented at the Tuileries. More than forty names come into my mind; these include only those whom I encountered personally in my goings to and fro, and even of those there must be many names I have now forgotten.

In the early hours of the morning the Regent had sent Admiral Jurien to the Governor of Paris to ask him to come to her as he had promised to do the previous evening.

"Well, how about General Trochu?" asked the Empress when the admiral returned. But the admiral, overcome, simply dropt his arms with a despairing gesture. He had just seen shattered the illusions to which he had so long clung. His invincible optimism was conquered. The general, instead of coming in person, sent

his chief-of-staff, General Schmitz, who never got further than the "guichet de l'Échelle."[1]

Trochu, who wandered about all day in the neighborhood, has given as an explanation that he was unable to get to the Empress. Now up to a quarter past three carriages and pedestrians entered and left without any difficulty, but the Governor of Paris, accompanied by fifty mounted officers, General Trochu, the idol of Paris, before whom crowds respectfully gave way, could not find means to enter the Tuileries!

Why could he not enter by the inner passages that I used when I went out?

But the climax was the last communication from the general to the Regent, when the Tuileries were threatened and he knew her to be in real danger.

He told her that he placed at her disposal an officer of the *Mobiles*—"in uniform." This "*En uniforme*" seems to me to be on a level of comical cynicism which has rarely been attained on the stage. It is the "*Tarte à la crême*" of the Fourth of September, 1870. It was thus that the general was prepared "to lay down his life on the steps of the throne" [2] by proxy!

The news which now reached us was terrible, and our situation became worse at every hour.

The Place de la Concorde was full of armed men whose intentions were by no means doubtful—they were the National Guards called up by General Trochu. They were not fully equipped but all had rifles. It has already been pointed out what feeble forces we had to oppose this Grand Army of insurrection, and that even these few

[1] The "guichet de l'Échelle" was a side entrance to the Tuileries, towards the Rue de Rivoli, generally used by private visitors (Translator's Note).

[2] Cf. page 124.

troops were by no means to be trusted. Moreover, we were not to put their fidelity to the test as the Empress had repeatedly forbidden General Mellinet to fire on the people, and she renewed this order in my presence. Besides, we had the enemy already within our walls, for the National Guards, so manifestly hostile, had for several days shared the duties of guarding the Tuileries with the regulars, and they looked at us with a mocking air, as much as to say, "Your minutes are numbered!"

Towards twelve or half-past (I am not quite certain of the precise time) a deputation came from the *Corps législatif* of whom the principal members were M. Buffet and Comte Daru. They were introduced to the Empress by their colleagues the Comte d'Ayguesvives and the Baron de Pierres, who had both been attached to the household, one as chamberlain to the Emperor, the other as equerry to the Empress. The Empress had with her Admiral Jurien and the Comtesse de la Poëze.

We others were going backwards and forwards engaged in all kinds of work. That is perhaps why the general effect of the scene remains in my memory whilst some minor details have escaped me.

It will be better, moreover, to let MM. Buffet and Daru speak, for they are two witnesses whose word is beyond suspicion and whom no one could accuse of partiality towards the Imperial Family. M. Buffet has related the facts before the Commission of Parliamentary Inquiry, of which Comte Daru was president, and the latter has confirmed and completed several times the evidence of his friend.

M. Buffet spoke first. He showed the Empress the reasons which made him and a large number of his colleagues feel sure that the scheme adopted that morn-

ing by the Council of Ministers had no chance of being accepted—that therefore there was no alternative to oppose to the motion for deposition, unless the Empress, by a spontaneous act, consented to place the executive power in the hands of the *Corps législatif*. The Assembly would then nominate a provisional Government, around which all honest men could rally and which would work solely for the salvation of the country, without prejudice to the dynastic question, which would remain intact.

It was a disguised abdication which they asked of the Empress; but what use would it have been? The scheme of the Deputies was as illusory as that of the Ministers, and the hour for such compromises and half measures was past. But we did not yet know how powerless the *Corps législatif* was, nor had that assembly itself yet realized its own weakness.

The Empress replied calmly and with great dignity.[1]

"That which you ask me to do, gentlemen, safeguards the future, so you tell me, but on condition that I quit now in the hour of greatest peril the post with which I have been entrusted. To this I cannot and dare not consent. . . . The future is to-day the least of my worries; I do not mean by this the future of France but the future of our Dynasty.

"Believe me, gentlemen, the ordeals to which I have been subjected have been so painful and so horrible that at present the thought of preserving the Crown for the Emperor weighs very little with me.

"My only anxiety, my one ambition is to carry out fully the duties which have been imposed on me. If you think—if the *Corps législatif* thinks that I may be an

[1] These are the expressions employed by M. Buffet. Later on he referred to the "calm energy" of the Empress.

obstacle, and that the name of the Emperor may be an obstacle rather than a rallying-point and a symbol of resistance, then let them pronounce our deposition; I shall not complain, I can then quit my post with honor, I shall not have deserted it. But I am convinced that the only judicious and patriotic action for the country's representatives is to rally round me and my Government, to put on one side for the present all internal questions and to unite our efforts firmly to repel the invader. . . . As for myself, I am ready to face all dangers and to follow the *Corps législatif* wherever it desires to form a nucleus of resistance. If this resistance were finally acknowledged to be impossible, I believe I could still be useful to obtain less unfavorable conditions of peace. Yesterday the ambassador of a great Power made me an offer to propose to neutral States mediation on the following two bases: First, the integrity of the territory of France; secondly, the maintenance of the Imperial Dynasty. I have replied that I was disposed to accept mediation on the first point, but I firmly declined to consider it on the second.

"The maintenance of the Dynasty is a question which matters only to this country, and I will never permit foreign Powers to intervene in our internal arrangements. . . ."

Several Deputies then spoke one after the other, setting forth new arguments or repeating under a different form those which M. Buffet had previously brought forward.

A sort of confused conversation then followed, in which answers did not always correspond to questions. It was interrupted by frequent messages from the Prefect of Police, who kept the Empress informed of the progress of the disorder.

She passed these on to M. Daru, who read them out loud.

These gentlemen were greatly moved and have acknowledged it before the Commission of Inquiry, and the tone of their evidence before that Commission showed how this emotion was revived by the recollection of that scene. With it was mingled a feeling of admiration which they were at no pains to conceal.

"Was the Empress calm?" asked the Comte de Durfort de Civrac, and M. Buffet replied, "She was perfectly calm." When the Empress told the Deputies that in her opinion the true and only means of effectually confronting the danger was to rally round her and her Government, M. Buffet exclaimed (and I am certain he was absolutely sincere) that for himself he was quite ready to do so if it had still been possible.

It was M. Daru, if I do not mistake, who understood best how to appeal to the Sovereign's inner feelings.

"You fear, Madame, that you may be accused of deserting your post, but you will have given a very great proof of courage in sacrificing yourself for the public good and in sparing France the horrors of a revolution—and that a revolution in the face of the enemy."

The Empress was plainly shaken. She had remained inflexible when they spoke of her interest; she listened to Daru when he spoke of duty, but her respect for legality —one of the dominant traits of her political character— now made her hesitate. "Well," she said, "if my Ministers range themselves on your side I will agree; I ask only one thing—that they will find me a house somewhere, and that I may be permitted to share to the very end the sufferings of the besieged capital."

The Deputies retired with this conditional agreement.

I saw them passing slowly out with bowed heads and solemn mien, like mourners who have just thrown the last drops of holy water on a coffin.

They found on returning to the *Corps législatif* that their enterprise was hopeless, and no further communication came to us from that quarter.

The sitting had opened with three motions before the Assembly: one emanated from the revolutionary Left and was brought forward by Jules Favre; the second was presented by M. Thiers in the name of the Center; the third was the scheme of the Government. The first proclaimed the deposition of the Sovereign, the second made it informal; that put forward by the Ministers we are already acquainted with. The Deputies went into committee to deliberate. At this moment M. Jacob, who was responsible for the policing of the approaches to the Chamber, received an order from General Trochu to withdraw his policemen who barred the way along the embankment; this was the sole instance in which the Governor of Paris made use of the powers which had been conferred on him by the state of martial law, and which placed the civil powers under the military authority.

The gates were opened to the people by the National Guards of the picquet which was commanded that day by Clément Laurier and Gabriel Ferry; the Chamber was invaded by the mob. The deposition of the Emperor and Empress was then "pronounced," as France learnt by a telegram of Gambetta's. His statement would have gained in accuracy if he had only added that the deposition had been pronounced by himself in the rostrum to the applause of some 500 insurgents who occupied the benches.

Jules Favre then started immediately for the Hôtel de Ville, accompanied by a considerable crowd; on the

Tuileries Quay he met the Governor of Paris, on horseback at the head of a numerous staff, who was apparently, in the words of Jules Favre, "awaiting events."

"We are going to the Hôtel de Ville," said Jules Favre, "come with us, General," and Trochu replied,[1] "Very well, I will come," and he went. The rest is well known. The conscience of General Trochu was at rest, had he not put at the disposition of the Empress a captain of *Mobiles* "in uniform"?[2]

All this was happening close to us, almost in sight of the Tuileries, but we knew nothing of it. No further news was reaching us.

Those who had left the palace to find out what had happened at the *Corps législatif*—Lesseps was one of them—had not yet returned.

At last we saw Henri Chevreau, Jérôme David and Busson-Billault coming from the *Palais Bourbon*, which was already in the hands of the mob.

They announced the invasion of the precincts of Parliament as an accomplished fact; the invasion of the Tuileries, they declared, would follow almost immediately; nothing was to be expected from the soldiers; a whole battalion had just thrown down its rifles in the Court of the *Corps législatif*.

Even if, *per impossibile*, we had succeeded in clearing

[1] The fact is attested by one of those who accompanied Jules Favre, a staunch Republican and an honorable man, whose evidence no one would challenge: M. Robinet, assistant to the mayor of one of the *arrondissements* of Paris during the first siege.

[2] The conscience of General Trochu also suggested something else. His first decree was thus conceived.

Art. 1. Public servants of all classes are hereby released from their oaths to the Imperial Government.

Art. 2. The oath of allegiance is finally abolished.

This was doubtless in his mind, a retrospective legalization of his own conduct, an absolution which he administered to himself.

the insurgents out of the Assembly and in giving the latter the possibility of deliberating in freedom, it was clear, from the step taken an hour before by M. Buffet and his colleagues, that the Empress could no longer count on the support of the Majority.

The Governor of Paris, who had three times refused to obey her summons, was manifestly on the side of the insurgents.

Paris was in the power of the National Guard, and the National Guard appeared solid in favor of the Revolution.

The Ministers, now persuaded that all resistance was useless, advised the Sovereign to leave the Palace. Prince Metternich and the Chevalier Nigra united in giving the same advice, which was also supported by Admiral Jurien and by Conti.

The Empress was shaken, but as yet refused to yield. Her first thought was for the safety of her son, and she wished to telegraph to Charles Duperré that he should take the Prince across the frontier without delay. I therefore sent the following telegram:

"Leave immediately for Belgium.—FILON."

Only the last two words, Belgium and my own name, were in clear, the rest was in our own cipher.

It is this telegram which was travestied in the "papers found at the Tuileries" under the form of a stupid pun. They presented it as "the last buffoonery of the Empire"; it was merely the first one of the Republic.[1]

[1] I think it unnecessary to discuss at length this imposture which has been explained many times over. I suppose that the telegraphists gave the Commissioners charged with the examination of the papers not the cipher text, but a translation of which they were the authors and which the Commission was foolish enough to accept.

One would have thought that any man of average intelligence would have seen through such an absurd concoction.

The telegram with the pun which they introduced ["Filons sur Belgique.—Fi-

After having sent off the telegram, I said to myself that the end of the drama was not far off, and I ran to my room to get my revolver.

Always hastening, I went through the Prince's study to assure myself that the precious objects it contained (the souvenirs of St. Helena; the hat, the gray overcoat, and the traveling library of Napoleon I) had been taken away. I came back in all haste to the Empress's room, which I found empty. I had been absent a quarter of an hour. What had happened during that quarter of an hour?

Everyone around the Empress had insisted that she ought to leave. One of them had said: "You will not abdicate? . . . Well, in an hour you will be in the hands of those who will make you abdicate by force, and you will have thus sacrificed the rights which you hold in trust. If you get away, no matter where you go, you carry these rights with you."

I am sure that this was the argument which convinced the Empress. All at once she made up her mind. Nothing had been arranged in view of this flight. Mme. Lebreton had in her pocket change for a 500-franc note, which de Lesseps had been to fetch in the morning. There was no other preparation. The Empress put on her hat, said good-by to the three Ministers, embraced a few ladies, and gave General Mellinet orders to withdraw the troops as soon as her retainers had left the Palace.

The old soldier kissed her hand with tears in his eyes. Then she left her home by a small dark passage, lighted

lon."] became sheer nonsense. It could only have meant that we (that is to say, the Empress and her household) were about to pass into Belgium, which was clearly false. If it was meant to imply that Duperré and the Prince were to cross the frontier, the wording was absolutely misleading and would have left the officer for whom it was intended very perplexed and troubled. The Commandant Duperré awaited a clear and precise order, this he received and carried out without losing a moment.

day and night by lamps, which ran behind her bedroom and dressing-room. All this was done in a few minutes.

I was dumbfounded to find the apartment empty after such a short absence. But I was not left much time for wondering.

A telegram was brought me from the Emperor to the Empress, the first we had received since the morning of August 31. It was dated from Brussels, September 4, at 6 A. M. Evidently it had been in the hands of the operators of the Imperial telegraph office for some hours. They had delayed sending it on until they had seen the standard taken down, and they hoped the message would never arrive at its destination.

It can be imagined with what eagerness I set myself to decipher it. I had been entirely absorbed in this task for some moments when the chief of the Empress's ushers rushed in in a very excited state. "But, Monsieur, you do not know, then, what has happened?" he said. "The Empress has gone, everyone has gone, and the people are now swarming into the Tuileries."

I hastily replaced the cipher in its box, which I put into the drawer of a little table. After locking the drawer with the key, which never left my possession, I put the half-deciphered telegram in my pocket, and ran to the *Salle des Maréchaux*. There from the central window I could judge of the situation.

An immense armed crowd surged heavily against the railings on the side which separated the public from the private gardens; it filled the principal avenue, overflowing into the flower beds, its tail stretching right away to the ornamental water on the Place de la Concorde, and thence into the Champs Elysées.

From my position nothing could be seen but heads and

bayonets. All those heads were turned towards the Palace. Mellinet's Light Infantry, lined up since the morning on the asphalt avenue which runs from the Pont Royal to the Rue des Pyramides, had already begun their retreat.

I went down to the archway, where there were still several members of the household. Having nothing further to do in the Tuileries, I left the Palace with the Comte de Suarez d'Aulan and Louis Conneau, by a secret passage which opened in the guard house of the Light Infantry.

I did not witness the final invasion of the Tuileries. This scene was described to me a little later by de Lesseps, when he came to England to receive the Order of the Star of India from the hand of Queen Victoria.

I give his characteristic account just as I wrote it down almost immediately after I had heard it from his lips. Those who knew the man will find it typical of him. I believe it to be quite true in the main, though he exaggerates a little the importance of his own part.

"I had gone," said Lesseps, "to the *Corps législatif* with a note from the Household and to bring back news. I found the Chamber invaded and the Deputies gathered in the committee rooms. I came back by the Quai d'Orsay A huge crowd had gathered in front of the offices of the *Journal Officiel.* They were destroying the Imperial arms on the building. I crossed the bridge. An immense mob barred my way through the gate. I said to them, 'Haven't you heard? They are having a jolly good time over there, smashing the Imperial arms in front of the offices of the *Journal Officiel.*' The whole lot ran off to the other side of the Seine, and I got through the gate.

"On entering the Tuileries I met Jurien, who had left the Empress to harangue the mob; he could not find either the Empress or the mob, and had quite lost his head.

"I went on towards the big clock; there was no one there. I met General de Montebello, who was in mufti, and I said to him, 'I am going to speak to these gentry.' I jumped the railings and crossed over to the insurgents gathered on the other side of the ornamental water. A *mobile* of my son's battalion cried, 'Hallo! that is de Lesseps.' I said, '*Mobiles*, to the front,' and they allowed the *Mobiles* to come forward. You know these young men were very popular. I said to them, 'Yes, truly I am M. de Lesseps, the cousin of the Empress. She has gone. What do you want at the Tuileries?' A big, strong fellow came up to me and said, 'M. de Lesseps, I have come here to prevent disorder.' 'And your name?' I asked. 'Victorien Sardou,' he replied. 'Ah! very good.' And I held out my hand. 'Help me to hold them for a bit.'

"I thus gained a little time. I again jumped the railings. I went to find Mellinet, and made him get up on a chair. In the meantime I sent Gardonne to make sure that the Empress had gone. He returned and told me that she had.

"Then I said to the crowd, 'You want to pass through the Tuileries to go to the Hôtel de Ville. Why not go by the side gates instead of passing by the clock archway?'

"They stuck to their idea, however. I sent back the Imperial Guard, and put the National Guards in charge; then seeing no way to convince the mob, I said to the National Guards, 'Gentlemen, we must let the stream flow but we will make a steep bank for it. It is my job, you know, making banks.' And so we made a bank. I stayed there for an hour and a half.

"A big, red-faced fellow put his fist under my nose and said, '*Tè!* You don't look pleased, Citizen.' I replied, '*Tè!* Go to h—, Citizen!'"

Let me now resume. Whilst the people were passing through the archway of the great clock, between the "banks" provided by de Lesseps, I had taken young Conneau to his home. I then put all my papers in safety, and was free to go and reassure my own people, who were in the greatest anxiety concerning me.

I had now only two thoughts—to find the Empress and to regain possession of the cipher, which I had forgotten at the moment of my departure.

The Regent had left, I had been told, with Prince Metternich and the Chevalier Nigra. At half-past seven I was at the Austrian Embassy.

There they told me that Prince Metternich had dined with the Chevalier Nigra, and I immediately went round to the Italian Embassy, which was situated at the Rond Point of the Champs Elysées, and I sent up my card. These gentlemen at once left the table and came to meet me. As I went up the staircase I saw them on the first-floor landing, watching my approach anxiously.

"Well," they said to me, "where is she?"

"But that is what I came to ask *you*."

They then told me the circumstances of the Empress's departure, and explained to me how they had lost sight of her.

Heartbroken at not being able to rejoin the Empress, I told them of my second cause of terrible anxiety, the forgotten cipher. I confided to them that I was determined at all hazards to recover it, in which decision they both encouraged me. I then returned to the Tuileries.

After trying for several hours I succeeded at last, after two unsuccessful attempts, in getting into the Empress's rooms.

Instead of the brave and noble women that I had seen

there that same afternoon I found some National Guards, who had billeted themselves in the apartments.

A jug of large dimensions on the table in the drawing-room sacred to the ladies-in-waiting, and a quantity of coarse broken glasses, overturned chairs, and marks of dirty boots on the polished parquet were the only signs which marked the passage of a Revolution.

In spite of the presence of a large number of witnesses, I was able to take away the cipher for the Imperial correspondence, without anyone guessing who I was or what I had come for.

It was past midnight when, in my own home in the Rue St. Placide, I at last deciphered the telegram from Napoleon III. At that time the Revolution was an accomplished fact. The Government born of the insurrection, and now four or five hours old, had turned out of the Parliament building, with an air of injured legality, the legitimate representatives of universal suffrage, who had attempted to reassemble. France, from one end of the country to the other, had swallowed and digested the lying telegram of Gambetta.

Trochu, who had risen in the morning as the Emperor's Governor of Paris, went to bed that night as President of the Republic, or something near it, after having destroyed the Government of which he had formed part and acted as leader to the rebellion which it was his duty to have put down. The Empress, whom he had sworn to defend to his last breath, had been hunted from her Palace and separated from her servants, and was vainly trying to get a few hours of repose, which overpowering fatigue disputed with mental anguish, knowing that at break of day she would begin the first stage of her exile. We shall now follow the fortunes of her journey.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM THE TUILERIES TO HASTINGS[1]

WHEN the Empress was at last persuaded to leave the Tuileries Her Majesty quitted her apartments and crossed the Galerie de Diane. She was accompanied by Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki, Prince Metternich, the Chevalier Nigra, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, M. Conti, and M. Eugène Conneau. It was then half-past three.

When Her Majesty reached that end of the Galerie de Diane which is next to the Pavillon de Flore, she turned to the left and followed the gallery which extended along the modern part of the Palace. She then crossed the new Salle des États, and found herself in front of the little door which opens into the great Galerie of the Louvre. This door was locked. The Empress and those with her had to retrace their steps, and they returned to the Pavillon de Flore, whence it was possible to reach the underground kitchens communicating with the bank of the Seine. But just when the Empress and those who accompanied her were about to descend the stairs, their attention was attracted by a sudden commotion in the Courtyard of the Tuileries, where a number of persons came rushing in confusion. The natural inference was that the mob had broken into the Tuileries, and the little party of fugitives

[1] A few days after we had settled at Chislehurst, Mme. Lebreton, at the request of the Empress, told me all that had transpired from the moment that the Empress left her apartments to the hour when she set her foot on English soil. I wrote down her narrative as nearly as possible in her own words, and then I read it over to her in order to make sure that I had not omitted or altered anything. It is this narrative which I reproduce in this chapter, word for word.

went back to the first floor of the Palace, whilst Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, separating himself from the anxious group which surrounded the Empress, went to reconnoiter, and ascertain whether it was possible for him to parley with the crowd. As if by instinct the fugitives went back by the way they had come, and from time to time they stopt to see how affairs were progressing outside the Palace. On the quay the tumult increased minute by minute, and the angry yells of the crowd were distinctly audible to the Empress.

In the Courtyard of the Tuileries troops were moving. The cavalry fell back behind the infantry, a movement which caused the crowd on the Carrousel to think that the infantry were about to use their rifles; but in reality the Tuileries were on the point of being abandoned. General Mellinet was parleying with the main body of the insurgents, which was trying to invade the Palace from the side of the gardens. Already the Standard was lowered, and the rumor had spread everywhere that the Empress had left the Palace; so those of her servants who had remained behind, reassured as to the safety of their mistress, now hastened their own departure.

The little group at last found itself again in front of the door opening into the Louvre, and this door was now open. The Empress went into the Museum, now denuded of nearly all the best pictures, which were about to be sent to Brest by her orders, there to remain in comparative safety. The party successively crossed the great Galerie, the great square Salon and the Galerie d'Apollon, one of the Museum attendants walking in front of the Empress to show her the way.

When the Empress reached the Salon, known as the Room of the Seven Chimneys, she suddenly paused in

front of Gericault's painting of the wreck of the *Medusa*. She had remembered those persons who had remained at the Tuileries, and who were, she thought, as yet unaware of her departure. She gave instructions to M. Conneau to return and inform them of what had happened, and also to see that they left the Palace in safety. M. Conneau at once obeyed, and took leave of Her Majesty, kissing her hand. The attendant, who witnessed this incident, saluted, as if realizing for the first time the identity of the lady to whom he was acting as guide. He then resumed his duty, and once again walked ahead of the Empress.

At the end of this succession of galleries, which were formerly hung with paintings of the French School, a landing opens out, which communicates with the Colonnade. From there a wide, straight staircase descends to the gallery containing the Egyptian antiquities. At the top of the staircase the little group again lost one of its members, as M. Conti left it by the express wish of the Empress. Her Majesty embraced M. Conti, and bade him *au revoir*, but she could give him no idea as to where they might next meet, as she felt that chance alone would direct her steps when she left the Tuileries.

The fugitives now found themselves beneath the archway which connects the Courtyard of the Louvre with the Place Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. The iron-barred gates were closed, and they tried in vain to open one of the side entrances. There was no alternative except to go out by the middle door. This was flung open by the porter. The Empress took the arm of Chevalier Nigra, and Mme. Lebreton that of Prince Metternich, and they crossed the wide space which separates the two flower gardens, known as "Les Jardins de l'Infante." Two streams of people, one coming from the Quay, and the other from the Rue de

Rivoli, met and mingled on the little tree-planted square in front of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, and the narrow streets opening off the square added ever-increasing contingents to the crowd.

At this moment a lad of about eighteen to twenty years of age noticed the two woman and ran towards them. He apparently recognized the Empress, threatened her for an instant with his fist, and then rushed back to the crowd, shouting as if to announce his discovery. But his voice was lost in the deafening noise, and the Empress was able to save herself by jumping into one of the hackney carriages which were standing on the rank. The carriage was, most fortunately, closed. Mme. Lebreton seated herself beside the Empress, and gave the driver the address of a friend, whose nationality she thought would prove an effective protection against suspicions and dangers, and who only that morning had come to offer the Empress every assurance of fidelity and devotion.

Just as the carriage was driving off, the lad reappeared and thrust his fist in the face of the Empress, muttering unintelligible threats; but as he did so the Chevalier Nigra seized him and held him back until the carriage was lost to sight in the crowd.

As to Prince Metternich, he had moved away a moment before in the direction of the Quay, doubtless with the intention of placing a carriage which was stationed a little distance off at the Empress's disposal.

The hackney carriage proceeded at a walking pace through the crowded Rue de Rivoli. Part of the mob was going to the Hôtel de Ville to cheer the new Government, and part of it was going to assist at the downfall of the Tuileries, and to see the home of the Kings of France once more delivered into the hands of the people. Cries of

"Long live the Republic!" "Long live the Nation!" and "Down with the Empire!" were heard on all sides. At the windows of the Louvre Barracks, soldiers wearing the uniform of the Imperial Guard watched the riot, and some of the young ones voiced the popular cries; the older men were silent.

The Empress, who had lowered her veil and covered her mouth with her hand, took in every detail of the scene. Some of the passers-by glanced inside the carriage, and one common fellow thrust his head through the door opposite the Empress and shouted at the top of his voice, "Long live the Nation!"

When opposite the Rue du 29 Juillet, Mme. Lebreton asked the driver to try and get out of the Rue de Rivoli. "We are rather in a hurry," she told him, "and we should be much obliged if you could possibly avoid the crowded streets." The driver obeyed, and whipt up his horses. At the corner of the Rue Caumartin and the Boulevard des Capucines the Empress noticed a number of people who had torn down and smashed the Imperial escutcheon which had been displayed outside a shop. This caused the Empress to turn to Mme. Lebreton with the remark, "They have lost no time!"

The carriage stopped at No. — Boulevard Malesherbes, but the concierge told them that the person for whom they were looking was away, and that the flat was shut up. As the driver had been paid and dismissed it was necessary to get another carriage. This was quickly fetched, and the Empress drove off in it to the residence of M. de Piennes, in the Avenue de Wagram. But M. de Piennes was away from home, and the servant in charge could only answer questions from the other side of the door, as by some misadventure he had been locked in and

could not open the door to the strangers who were standing outside.

As a last resort the Empress bethought her of the American Legation, but neither she nor Mme. Lebreton knew the address of Mr. Washburne, the United States Minister. However, this idea suggested another. The Empress remembered one devoted gentleman who was, in a sense, associated with her life. This gentleman was none other than her dentist, Dr. Evans, who then lived in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, and whose nationality and independent position would permit him to shelter her without any fear of getting himself into trouble.

Upon the arrival of the two ladies at Dr. Evans' house they were shown into his study, and the Empress sat down with her back to the door, lest the unexpected sight of her might elicit some exclamation from the doctor, and thus betray her identity to the servants.

The Empress was not disappointed in her belief in the doctor's loyalty. No sooner had Dr. Evans recognized and greeted Her Majesty than he at once set about devising the best means for her escape. He had invited to dinner that evening an intimate friend, Mr. C., an American like himself, and he asked Her Majesty to allow him to take this friend into his confidence, as he felt sure that his courage, his ability, and his energy would be invaluable in the hazardous enterprise on which he proposed to embark. The Empress readily gave the required permission, and Dr. Evans went at once into the heart of the city, to report the progress of the Revolution. Upon his return he told the Empress that the Tuileries had been occupied and afterwards evacuated by the insurgents, and that the Palace was at present in the hands of the National Guard; he also informed her that the Republic had been

proclaimed, and that a Government was already in process of formation at the Hôtel de Ville. The Ministers had left their Ministries, and the powers appointed by the Regent existed no longer. It was clear that under the circumstances the Empress had no choice but to leave Paris.

The first step taken by Dr. Evans and Mr. C. to ensure the success of their scheme was to make certain that the way out of Paris was still open. They therefore visited the fortifications; but the gates were unguarded, and carriages could go out and return without being subjected to any kind of examination.

Whilst Dr. Evans and his friend busied themselves with the preparations for the flight from Paris, the Empress took some much needed repose, and at five o'clock [1] she seated herself in the carriage with Mme. Lebreton, Dr. Evans and Mr. C.

Some *mobiles* were on sentry duty at the Pont de Neuilly, but they only stopt the carriage for a moment, and it then rapidly disappeared down the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

The carriage took the road to St. Germain-en-Laye, and crossed the streets of the usually quiet little town, now filled with uproar. From St. Germain the travelers proceeded to Mantes, where Dr. Evans left his carriage and horses in the care of one of his friends. Another carriage was hired at Mantes, and this conveyed Her Majesty to within a few miles of Evreux. Towards midnight the carriage was again changed. Evreux was passed on the morning of September 6. The great square was thick with *mobiles*, to whom rifles were being issued at the Hôtel de Ville. Their commander, the Comte d'Arjuzon, Chamberlain to the Emperor, came out of the *Mairie*, drest in

[1] Evidently the author means 5 A. M. September 5 (Translator's Note).

civilian clothes, just as the carriage drove by. His eyes met those of Mme. Lebreton, but it is uncertain whether he recognized the Empress or her companion.

A halt was made at an inn outside the town, and the carriage stopt to feed and water the horses without unharnessing them. A great number of *mobiles* were gathered in this locality, as they were now returning to their homes after having received their equipment, and as they passed and repassed the carriage they looked curiously at the two ladies who were sitting inside. Dr. Evans managed to procure some food at the inn, which he brought to the Empress, who partook of a light meal before the carriage once more started on the road from Evreux to Bernay, and thence, viâ Lisieux, to the coast.

Dr. Evans and Mr. C. took turns to sit beside the driver, ostensibly to smoke a cigar, but actually to "sound" the driver and find out whether he suspected anything. The driver whom they had engaged after leaving Evreux was overjoyed at the Revolution in Paris, and indulged in the sanguinary hope that "one would finish off all the *bourgeois*."

Nevertheless, he little guessed whom he was driving. Towards evening this man, finding himself at some considerable distance from his original starting-place, refused to go farther, and deposited the travelers at an inn, in a place the name of which had escaped Mme. Lebreton's memory. Here they had to cross the great hall of the inn, which also served as a kitchen, and where several rustics were sitting down to a glass; but hardly was Her Majesty settled in the only available bedroom than the fugitives again experienced a moment of awful anxiety. It appeared that a man who had just arrived from Paris had inquired about the names of the travelers.

They now fully believed that all was indeed lost, and Her Majesty was informed of their fears. But the mysterious inquirer turned out to be a perfectly harmless individual who suspected nothing and who was quite content when told that four English people had arrived at the inn before himself. Having satisfied his curiosity, the stranger troubled them no more.

It would have been easy for Her Majesty to have minimized the constant danger of detection by adopting some disguise which would have hidden that lovely face, whose features, thanks to the art of photography, are familiar to most people. And the face of the Empress, once seen, was not easily mistaken for another. It would have been quite possible for the Empress to have made herself look older by some arrangement of her hair or by some other means. Mme. Lebreton, with the frankness which the situation demanded, and which her devotion authorized, reproached the Empress for refusing to take these necessary precautions, and, in fact, went so far as to accuse her Royal mistress of vanity.[1] But the Empress was not actuated by mere vanity; she knew that if she were discovered in any kind of disguise she would be inevitably exposed to ridicule, and she refused even to contemplate such a situation. She wished, in such an event, to maintain her dignity as a woman and as a Sovereign, and she rightly estimated the effect which her personality and beauty would produce on those who might try to arrest her. Her beauty was her sole weapon, her only defense, and by its aid she knew she would be enabled to play the Empress to the last.

The night of September 6–7 was passed quietly at the country inn. In the early morning a carriage conveyed

[1] Mme. Lebreton had in mind that black penciled line under the eyelashes, which has been mentioned in the first chapter.

the Empress and her companions to a local railway station. But the time of the train had been miscalculated, and there was a long time to wait, during which the Empress read, her veil carefully lowered. At Lisieux, where the party left the train, the town and the railway station were crowded with *mobiles*. From Lisieux the Empress and her friends drove to the hotel at Deauville, where Mrs. Evans happened to be staying, and whilst Mr. C. and Mme. Lebreton went into the hotel by the main entrance, Dr. Evans and the Empress slipt in almost unobserved, and went to the rooms occupied by Mrs. Evans, upon whom the Empress was supposed to be paying a call.

The great difficulty which now confronted the friends of the Empress was to discover the best means of getting her out of France. Dr. Evans at once set about solving this problem, and as he was walking on the quay, wondering what course he should adopt, he happened to notice a small but beautiful yacht. An idea struck him; he asked the name of the owner of the yacht, and was told that she belonged to Sir John Burgoyne, an English officer, who was staying at Deauville.

Dr. Evans at once went in search of Sir John, told him the whole story, and begged his assistance. Sir John Burgoyne listened attentively, and exprest himself willing to help the Empress, subject to his wife's consent. This was easily obtained, and the day was not nearly over when the answer in the affirmative reached Dr. Evans.

Towards midnight the Empress left the hotel where she had remained in hiding and crossed the moonlit lawns of Deauville. All was silent and deserted. A few Custom-house officials were walking about in the proximity of the yacht, where Sir John Burgoyne awaited the Empress. In order to avoid suspicion, Sir John greeted

his illustrious passenger with a familiar handshake, as if she were an intimate friend who was about to come on board his yacht. But when Sir John found himself alone with the Empress in the cabin his manner changed, and he respectfully kissed the hand which she extended to him.

At that moment the sleeping town was awakened by shouting and singing. The fugitives on the yacht recognized the strains of the *Marseillaise*, mingled with the cries of "Long live the Republic!" "Long live the Nation!" which had followed them all the way from the Tuileries, and the Empress momentarily feared that she had been traced to Deauville. But this was not the case; the noise was due to the arrival of the Paris train, and the travelers having shouted and sung until they were tired, repaired to the various hotels, and all was quiet once more.

At five in the morning the yacht set sail, and the Empress lost sight of the shores of France. Lady Burgoyne had given her own cabin to the Empress, who shared it with Mme. Lebreton. The first few hours were uneventful, but the breeze freshened before the yacht entered English waters, and when night fell the wind was so strong that Sir John Burgoyne became uneasy. His apprehensions were more than justified, as that night the wind and storm wrecked a yacht very similar to his own, and farther down the Channel H. M. S. *Captain* went down, the name of whose commander was, by some uncanny coincidence, also Burgoyne, and the news of whose loss caused considerable excitement in England.

Sir John took care, however, not to alarm his illustrious passenger, but through the thin wooden partitions the Empress could hear him discussing the gravity of the situation with Lady Burgoyne, a woman of courage and intellect, of whose advice he often availed himself. As a matter

of fact, he was not more of a sailor than was his wife, but upon Sir John rested the responsibility of what was the best course to adopt under the present circumstances. Should he run before the wind, or should he keep the ship close-hauled? Lady Burgoyne counseled the last, and her advice was taken.

But there came a moment in this long night of storm when the Empress thought that the little yacht was being dashed to pieces, and she heard the ominous words: "We are ashore!"

"What are they saying?" asked Mme. Lebreton, who had no strength left to pray, but who still convulsively clutched her rosary. "They are saying," the Empress told her, "that we are near the land!" And Mme. Lebreton, reassured by this free translation of a sinister phrase, cried: "Near the land! Ah, God be praised." She learnt later that the Empress had believed the yacht as good as lost, but happily it was a false alarm; and when day broke after the awful night the wind dropt, and the vessel resumed her course. Sir John Burgoyne landed the Empress at Cowes, and there Her Majesty reembarked and reached the mainland a few hours later. On the evening of the same day (Friday, September 9) she joined her son at Hastings.

CHAPTER IX

MONSIEUR RÉGNIER

IT was on the morning of September 12 that Eugéne Conneau and I, after having vainly hunted for the Empress for several days, at last had the pleasure of seeing our Sovereign once more, and it was possible for me to place in her hands the Emperor's message which I had in my care. That message could now tell her nothing that was new, but she was happy to possess it and to keep it as an historic document.

The Empress and her son occupied quite modest apartments at the Marine Hotel, situated on the Eastern Parade. This temporary resting-place, where she was only to stay a very few days, has, all the same, its peculiar interest and importance, since a photograph of it nearly caused a change in the course of French history.

We found Her Majesty seated near the fireplace in a room on the first floor, looking out on the sea front and communicating by large folding doors with her bedroom. This room served at the same time as a drawing-room and a dining-room, and I remember that our first conversation was interrupted almost at once by the servants who entered without ceremony to lay the table.

I was painfully affected by all this, but she paid no attention to these details. She resumed at once and without any effort the ways of private life; but if she renounced, without a sigh of regret, all her retinue and splendor, she never forgot her great duties. She remained conscious—I saw this at once—of the position which she had occupied

and which she still occupied. "I believe," she said to me, "that I can still be useful to the National Defense." With this view she had decided to write to the Emperors of Russia and Austria; she desired to remind the first of the definite statement transmitted by General Fleury in his dispatch of August 26, and the second of the promises made in his name by Prince Metternich, promises to which she had alluded in her interview with the Deputies on September 4. She desired to ensure that France, under the new Government which the nation had chosen, or, at any rate, accepted, should still benefit by the friendly dispositions of these two powers. The drawing up of these two letters was our first work, but one must understand clearly that my share of it was quite insignificant. The Empress herself wrote the letters which she signed, and it would have been a useless blunder to have attempted to relieve her of this task. She had a natural talent for saying things in a clear and striking manner. She could have given some valuable lessons in style to professional scribblers, just as La Rochefoucauld and Saint Simon could have taught more than one heavy rhetorician of their time his trade.

Here is the letter which the Empress addrest to the Tsar, a letter a nearer date for which I am not able to give:

"Hastings, *September*, 1870.

"Sire,

"An exile from my country, I write to-day to Your Majesty. If, some days ago, when the destinies of France were still in the hands of the Emperor's Executive, I had taken the step I am taking now, I should perhaps have appeared in the eyes of Your Majesty and in those of France as lacking faith in the vitality of my country. The

last events have given me liberty of action, and I can now appeal to Your Majesty's heart. If I have correctly understood the reports sent by our Ambassador, General Fleury, your Government negatived *à priori* the eventual possibility of the dismemberment of France.

"Sire, Fate has been against us. The Emperor is a prisoner and the object of calumnies. Another Government has taken up the task which we had considered it our duty to accomplish. I implore Your Majesty to use your influence in order that an honorable and lasting peace may be concluded when the moment comes. May France, whatever her Government, find in Your Majesty the same kind dispositions that you have shown to us in these days of trial. Such is the prayer that I address to you. In my situation everything is liable to be misjudged. I pray Your Majesty, therefore, to keep secret this step, which your generous soul will easily understand, and to which I am encouraged by the memory of your stay in Paris."

The Emperor of Russia answered this letter as follows:

"Tsarskoe-Selo, *September* 20 (old style).
October 2, 1870 (new style).

"I have received, Madame, the letter Your Majesty has kindly sent me. I understand and I appreciate the sentiments which dictated it and made you forget your own misfortunes and think only of those of France. I am deeply concerned for that country, and I long ardently that a prompt peace should come and end its sufferings and the evils which are resulting for all Europe. I believe that such a peace will be lasting in proportion as it is based on justice and moderation. I have done, and shall continue to do, all that lies in me to contribute to this result, for which I

fervently pray. I thank you for your kind remembrance and for your confidence in my sentiments. In renewing to you the assurance of my friendship, I am, Madame,

"Your Majesty's good brother,

("Signed) ALEXANDER."

I have not, unfortunately, the text of the letter addrest by the Empress Eugénie to the Emperor Francis Joseph, but it is easy to guess the contents after reading the reply of the Austrian Emperor:

"MADAME, MY SISTER,

"I am profoundly sensible of the trust Your Majesty reposes in me, and the letter which comes to me through Count Apponyi has touched me deeply. No one could show more patriotism and personal abnegation in the midst of such cruel misfortunes. The expression of these noble sentiments would call forth all my sympathies if they were not already given to Your Majesty in the highest degree, as well as to your unfortunate country. I tender well-merited homage to the courage which endures unfalteringly such overwhelming blows, and my heart takes a real share in the anguish suffered by Your Majesty as a mother, as a wife and as a Sovereign. The fate of France is my earnest preoccupation. To do everything possible in her favor according to the dictates both of policy and of humanity, I have not awaited the call of Your Majesty. I feel, too deeply, how urgently necessary it is that a prompt and honorable peace should come to put an end to the terrible calamities of this war. My hopes and my efforts tend unceasingly to this end, and I shall not stop in my endeavors. It will be the easier for me now to plead in the cause of peace, because my influence has

always been exercised in that sense. It has been no fault of mine that peace was not preserved, and in the midst of the sorrowful emotions caused by the sight of such ruin, I find at least a sad consolation in thinking that I cannot reproach myself with having helped in any way to bring about the outbreak of this disastrous war. On the contrary, I have done all I could to prevent a conflict, of which I could see the dangers for France and the grave embarrassments for my Empire. The reestablishment of peace is to-day the object of all my wishes, and so far as I am permitted I shall devote to it my most assiduous care. But Your Majesty knows that a Sovereign cannot listen only to the inspirations of his heart. He must comply with the necessities of his position, and fulfil the duties which Providence has laid upon him towards the peoples whose destinies have been placed in his charge.

"I can but follow the line of conduct which is traced for me by such lofty considerations; but Your Majesty will always find me disposed to make sincere efforts towards lessening the evils which have burst over France. Of all the neutral Powers, I think Austria is the one which is animated by the most friendly feelings for France, and will raise its voice most willingly in her favor. My true sympathies for that country are augmented by her misfortunes, and I shall be happy to be able to give Your Majesty some proof of the true personal attachment that I have long felt for you.

"I pray Your Majesty to accept my affectionate homage as well as the assurance of the sentiments with which

"I am, Madame, Your Majesty's good brother,

"(*Signed*) FRANCIS JOSEPH.

"SCHOENBRUNN, *Oct.* 12, 1870."

The Empress had with her at Hastings, besides Madame Lebreton, her two nieces, Marie and Louise, who had been in England for some weeks, also the Comtesse Clary, who came to join her husband, attached to the Prince's person. Messieurs Duperré and Lamey, the other two aides-de-camp, completed the group at this early date. As to M. Eugène Conneau, the Empress encouraged him to return to France to take part (if there was still time) in the defense of Paris. He hastened to obey her. This brave officer, who had already earned his spurs in Mexico and elsewhere, distinguished himself during the siege under the orders of General Favé, who commanded one of the sectors.

Commander Duperré and Madame Lebreton now busied themselves in seeking out a residence which should provide a fit dwelling-place for the fugitive Sovereign and her son. We were eager to leave the Marine Hotel where we were very uncomfortable and where we suffered a good deal from the curiosity of the ill-mannered. In fact, crowds were almost always hanging about in front of the house watching the movements of the Prince and his mother, and staring into the big bay windows of the hotel façade, so that we felt like wild animals exposed to the inspection of passers-by in a glass cage. When night fell and the blinds were drawn we were left in comparative peace.

One evening, it was only four days after our arrival, we were all together with the Empress in the drawing-room on the first floor. The gentlemen had remained downstairs to smoke. Towards nine o'clock one of them came up to inform Her Majesty that a Frenchman had called and insisted upon being received.

"What is his name?"

"He gives the name of Régnier."

"Oh!" said Madame Lebreton, "it is the gentleman who has pestered me with communications these two days. He has a plan for taking Your Majesty back to France. He is the man who has four proclamations—one for the army, one for the fleet, one for the French people, and one for foreign Powers."

"That is the man," said the aide-de-camp. "We do not know how to get rid of him."

The Empress turned to me: "Go and hear what he has to say."

I went at once, and the three aides-de-camp disappeared one after the other, leaving me *tête-à-tête* with M. Régnier. I expected to find myself in the presence of one of those political lunatics such as I have often encountered both before and since. But directly I cast my eyes on the visitor I was differently imprest. I saw before me a man of perhaps fifty years of age, with a rather plebian cast of face at but the same time intelligent and resolute in expression. The square and powerful jaw, the penetrating, imperious and hard glance gave him rather the air of an old non-commissioned officer who had allowed his white hair to grow into a lion's mane: not one of those non-commissioned officers who are beloved in their regiment, but one who is feared. I asked him who he was. He replied brusquely, "I am nobody at all," and without further preamble he entered on his business and showed me his plan. The Empress, according to him, ought not to accept her deposition. She should embark on one of the ships of war which had remained loyal, take up her position in a seaport town (Le Havre, for example), summon the Chambers around her and enter into negotiation with the Prussians.

I said to M. Régnier, "You wish to explain this line of conduct to the Empress? It is useless, you would only waste your time. She has absolutely decided not to take away a single chance or a single soldier from the Government of National Defense. If need be, she would even help the men who have overthrown her."

The preceding pages have shown, I think, and those that follow will do so even more clearly, how thoroughly justified I was in speaking thus.

M. Régnier replied, "The Empress misconceives her duty. Her duty is to recover power and to treat with Prussia. France is beaten, worse beaten than Austria was after Sadowa. Of her two armies, one is captured and the other soon will be." Here I protested, but he repeated impressively, "The other soon will be. What remains is a rabble without value."

"France is arming," I said to him, "we shall see again the national uprising of 1792."

M. Régnier sneered. "You know very well that the national uprising of 1792 is a legend. Moreover, the men of to-day are not the men of that time. Long prosperity has sapped our strength; I tell you all is finished. If they treat at once France will keep her territory intact, if not, in three months' time she will be dismembered, cut up—I tell you there is but one thing to do: and that is—to conclude peace."

"Go and tell that to the men who have hunted the Empress from the Tuileries, it is for them to treat."

"Oh! They would be willing enough to do it, and if I believed that they could succeed I would wish them luck, but they cannot. No one would negotiate with a Government born of riot and which dare not consult the electors. For the foreign Powers, for the army, for the

seven and a half millions of Frenchmen who voted "Yes" at the Plebiscite of May 8, the Emperor is still the Emperor. Now he is not a free agent, and he has delegated his powers to the Empress, it is she therefore who must treat for peace."

"But she of whom you speak is, at this moment, a woman helpless and isolated, without friends, without support; she has not a shilling or a soldier at her call."

"What about the army of Metz?"

"Who has told you that Bazaine was faithful? Who has told you that Bismarck would refuse to treat with the Government of National Defense and would be disposed to treat with that of the Empress?"

"No one. . . . Ah! do not think you have beaten me. I know nothing, but the duty of the Empress is to find it out and that without delay."

"But how? It is a very difficult proposition."

"Nonsense! It is the easiest thing in the world."

I considered a moment.

"M. Régnier," I said, "I see that you are a positivist, you seem to forget that moral forces exist and that those forces rule the world. The Empire at this moment is beaten down by such a violent stream of public opinion that it is impossible to set it up again. Let us suppose your idea is realized. The existence of the Imperial Family, once back in the Tuileries, would be a veritable agony and it would very soon be swept away in a bloody catastrophe."

"What is that to me?" said M. Régnier coldly. "I am no follower of the dynasty. I don't care a fig for the Napoleons. What I want is to save the territory of my country. If you are a good Frenchman you ought to agree with me."

He had now come close to me, speaking almost in my face, as if he wished to hypnotize me.

"And," he continued, "if the Empress is the heroine they claim her to be, she will sacrifice herself and drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs."

I went up to the Empress and entreated her to grant M. Régnier a few minutes' audience. I found myself up against an immovable refusal, and I had to convey this refusal to the visitor. He rose and took up his hat. I could not help saying to him, "You might perhaps see the Emperor."

"That is what I shall try to do, but I shall not be allowed to get near him. . . . Ah! if I had some message, such as a photograph, signed by the Prince for his father. . . . Wait a moment, I think I can find one."

He returned in a few minutes bringing three views of the Marine Hotel and of the Hastings sea front.

I said, "Return to-morrow morning at seven o'clock and you shall have the answer."

After he was gone I went up at once to the Prince, who was going to bed, and I heard him say his prayers as usual.

"*Monseigneur*," I said, "there is a Frenchman in Hastings who is about to go to Wilhelmshöhe. Will you confide to him a message for the Emperor?"

"Willingly," replied the Prince. "What shall I send my father?"

"Merely your signature with just a word on one of these photographs."

Uhlmann [1] went off to find pen and ink. The photographs signed, I rejoined the Empress and submitted M. Régnier's request, but without success.

[1] The Prince's servant (Translator's Note).

"We do not know this man," she said, "and we cannot confide any message to him; but to soften the refusal tell him that the mission he wishes to undertake presents certain dangers, and that I will not expose him to them."

I retired to my own room. It was a night full of anguish. I pondered painfully the cruel words of M. Régnier. I was profoundly devoted to my Sovereign. I loved my country passionately. In the end I persuaded myself that by disobeying the first I should serve both.

The next day, the 17th, at seven o'clock M. Régnier came to my room and I gave him the three photographs signed Louis Napoleon. On the largest he had written, "My dear Papa, I send you some photographs of Hastings. I hope you will like them."

I said to M. Régnier: "The Empress has refused her sanction, but I have taken it upon myself to disobey her orders."

We did not exchange another word, he barely thanked me, and hurried away as if afraid that I should suddenly change my mind. My eyes followed him. I seem still to see him striding across the great puddles and disappearing in the distance along the front at that hour quite deserted.

This is the whole truth of the matter. M. Régnier has asserted that I gave him the photographs on behalf of the Empress—it is absolutely false. It was said that he had waylaid the Prince whilst out walking, and that he had extorted these signatures from an inexperienced child of fourteen—that also is false. Everything happened as I have just stated. Let each one bear the responsibility of his own acts.

The next day we left Hastings to settle in Chislehurst. The day after that, if my memory serves me, Jérôme

David, who had been in London some days, came to pay the Empress a visit. They had been together some five minutes when the Empress called me.

"What is the meaning of this?" she said. "You have given this Régnier a photograph signed by the Prince which I had forbidden you to give him?"

I admitted it at once.

"You have acted very wrongly; this man is a spy of Bismarck's, or an agent of the Government at Paris who wishes to dishonor us in the eyes of the nation by making it appear that we are intriguing with Prussia."

Jérôme David explained to me that he had known Régnier at school, that this individual, trading on this acquaintance, had found him out in London and in a short interview had hinted at his mysterious projects.

From that hour we lived at Chislehurst in a state of continual apprehension. What was M. Régnier doing? I learnt this later, when I read the manuscript notes in which he minutely related the incidents and impressions of his journey to Ferrières, the difficulties and dangers encountered on the road, his arrival at the Prussian headquarters the same day as Jules Favre; the small consideration shown to Jules Favre, the deference and kindness with which he (Régnier) was treated by all those with whom he had come in contact, notably by M. de Hatzfeldt, who had given him his own room and had spoken with respectful emotion of the misfortunes of the Empress. He had seen the Chancellor, showing him the photographs which he carried, and had asked permission to be admitted without delay to see the prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe and to submit to him his plan for an immediate peace. This plan which had seemed ridiculous to us in Hastings was taken seriously by Count Bismarck, who, in some way, adopted

it with modifications. But before anything was done it was necessary to know whether Bazaine and his army still held to the Emperor, and whether he would back Régnier's plan, and thus provide the basis and the necessary guarantee for negotiation.

Régnier had therefore to go to the marshal and bring back the latter's consent. This mission, incredibly strange and perilous, Régnier accepted and accomplished. Such was the story he told.[1]

We knew nothing of all this, but on September 28 in the morning a dramatic happening enlightened our ignorance. A message came to inform me that General Bourbaki was at Camden Place. My astonishment can be imagined. The commander of the Imperial Guard, whom I believed to be closely blockaded in the lines at Metz with his soldiers, was in the room adjoining the one in which I was going over a page of Virgil's "Georgics" with the Prince.

I ran to him at once. I found the general seated between his wife and his sister. He was drest in the strangest manner which more or less disguised him. He spoke with difficulty, and had the air of one struck by a thunderbolt. Madame Bourbaki, severe and sullen, did not return my salutation, and her husband offered me his hand with visible hesitation. He repeated at intervals: "Lost! Dishonored!" The Empress, I was told, had been unable to draw from him anything except the words: "You asked for me and here I am!" What had happened?

[1] There may well have been many omissions or perversions of fact in these notes, and I have only too much reason to know how little respect for the truth worried M. Régnier. But where they touched on the language and attitude of the Chancellor they were confirmed on all points by the conversations of Bismarck with Mr. G. and with General Boyer, conversations of which an accurate report is given in the next chapter.

The same day the general dictated to me a note which contained a recital of the facts and which I reproduce textually:

"Saturday, September 24, I went up to the fort of St. Julien and I remained in the neighborhood until five o'clock in the evening. When I returned to my headquarters Generals Dauvergne and de Villers told me that one of Marshal Bazaine's nephews was looking for me everywhere and wanted to speak to me and give me a letter from the marshal; that he was not willing to leave it and had returned with it to General Headquarters. Whilst talking to these officers I was making ready to go to the marshal, when I received a telegram ordering me to report myself without delay. I had a horse saddled and went off to headquarters, where first of all I met Colonel Boyer, who said, 'Do you know a M. Régnier? Have you seen him at the Tuileries? There he is, walking about.'

"I then saw a gentleman who was walking with the marshal, and I replied that I had never seen him near their Majesties.

"The marshal, hearing that I was there, introduced M. Régnier. This gentleman at once began to speak; he gave me news of my sister, showed me photographs of the house in which the Empress was staying, and said that he had one to pass on to the Emperor, upon which was written in the Prince Imperial's handwriting something like this, 'I hope that you will be pleased to have a photograph of the house where we are now living.' M. Régnier then explained to me that Jules Favre had intended to treat for an armistice, but that fortunately the negotiations had fallen through; that one had to accept the fact that

France was beaten and that she must therefore treat; that the conditions offered by Prussia would be more favorable for France if the negotiations were with the only rightful government that existed, that of the Empress-Regent. Then, almost at this moment, the marshal came in and told me that the Empress desired to have either Marshal Canrobert or myself with her.

"Marshal Bazaine then added that for him, as for the army, there was but one government, that of the Regent, that he had had no communications from any government other than the Emperor's, and that, if the Regent would treat, he and his army would back up the treaty which she alone could make. He told me further that as I was aide-de-camp to the Emperor, and commander-in-chief of the Imperial Guard, all was arranged so that I could leave Metz.

"I remarked that all this seemed very extraordinary, that there was not a word from the Empress nor a word from my sister to vouch for M. Régnier, had there been I should not have hesitated. On my asking the marshal what he would do in my place, he answered that he should report himself to the Empress at once, and, moreover, he said that for some time it had been his intention to have an officer with her. My position, he declared, fitted me for this duty better than anyone else; in any case, Marshal Canrobert could not go on account of the pain in his legs. I commented that for me to go in this manner would make me appear a deserter. 'Not at all,' said the marshal, 'for I will give you written instructions and put it in orders to-morrow so that it will be known to all that I have sent you to the Empress-Regent.'

"'Under these conditions,' I replied, 'I have nothing more to say and I will go.'

"Having reflected that I had no mufti, the marshal put his own civilian clothes at my disposal, and as his trousers were too wide for me, he even went so far as to take off his braces and give them to me. Then he handed to me my order for departure. M. Régnier, who had been present during the whole conversation, read the order and remarked that it was not dated. They discust the date, I do not know why, and the marshal put a date that I believed to have been that of the day, the 24th, but I have since seen that he had put the 15th.

"Marshal Canrobert told me that I should find his wife with the Empress, that he approved of my going, and he asked me to give news of him to the *Maréchale*.

"At seven in the evening I got into the carriage with M. Régnier. I was drest rather like the international doctors, for they had given me a cap with a red cross on a white ground. Seven doctors from Luxembourg, who had also to go, occupied two other carriages.

"We arrived at the outposts, on the other side of Moulins, two leagues [1] from our headquarters, but there had been a misunderstanding between the officers in charge of the flags of truce, and we were not allowed to pass until the next day at daybreak. A Prussian colonel came to meet us and put himself in communication with M. Régnier, who apologized to him for having made him wait at the outposts since the night before. The colonel replied that that was so: he had been there since three o'clock the day before. M. Régnier added that he had advised him of his delay in a letter which had not arrived. He made us get into a carriage and took us himself to Corny, the headquarters of Prince Frederick Charles. M. Régnier asked me if I would like to see the Prince. I

[1] Between seven and eight miles (Translator's Note).

replied, 'Not for the world.' He told me that the chief of the general staff would be very happy to shake hands with a colleague. I replied that for the time being I desired to pass unnoticed; and, in fact, no one spoke to me.

"About an hour later they harnessed up a great brake, into which we all mounted, except M. Régnier, who remained at the Prince's camp, saying that he was going to see Bismarck, and that in four or five days he would be with the Empress bringing a draft treaty. We were escorted by an officer who was aide-de-camp to Prince Frederick Charles, and whom I had often met in Paris where he was attached to the Prussian Embassy. His name was, I think, M. de Siskow. This officer said to me when he left us: 'I recognized you at once.' 'So did I,' I replied, 'but the circumstances are too sad—and I have the further sorrow of having had to leave my army corps.' 'I hope,' he said, 'that we shall meet again in happier circumstances.' He had overwhelmed me with attentions before he made himself known to me and had been extremely polite to me. This is a positive proof that all the staff and Prince Frederick himself knew of my journey and approved of it.

"At Remilly we found a special train which, by order from high authority, was to take us as far as Luxembourg, but which by subsequent instructions left us at Sarrebrück and from this point to Luxembourg we always had a carriage reserved for us at the expense of the Prussian Government. The bearing of M. Régnier towards the Prussian authorities had already made me fear that I had been misled, and when I read the papers in Belgium, it seemed to me impossible that as things were the Empress could sign a treaty in the position in which she found

herself, and I bitterly regretted having left my head-quarters.

"I therefore request, seeing that I have been deceived (for it is clear I can render no service to the Empress), that I may be allowed the privilege of returning to my post immediately so that I may share the fate of the soldiers I have the honor to command.

"I will add that at Moulins or at Ars M. Régnier handed me a few sheets of paper, telling me that it was an account of his interview with Bismarck. He also handed me his pocket-book, suggesting that I should use his passport. I found also in the pocket-book an unsealed letter addressed to his wife.

"(*Signed*) C. BOURBAKI,
"General of Division, Aide-de-camp to the Emperor,
Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Guard,
"CAMDEN PLACE, CHISLEHURST,
"*September* 28, 1870."

This note, very circumstantial in all that touched on his departure from Metz, did not explain to me why the general, instead of coming straight to the Empress, as he had been ordered to do, and keeping strictly incognito as he had agreed with Régnier, had stopt two days in Belgium and had let himself be recognized by various persons. During his stay in Brussels he had met many people and learnt and pondered many things. He seemed to me very reserved and even niggardly of details when we questioned him on the attitude of Bazaine and the troops placed under his orders towards the Emperor and the Empire. He knew nothing of what was passing in the town of Metz, or if the Republic had been proclaimed there. During the journey which he made in the train

with Régnier, that person had minutely explained to him several times over the only possible conditions of peace as outlined by Bismarck. Naturally we questioned him on this subject: "I have quite forgotten," said he, tapping his forehead, "I cannot recall a single word that was told me by that *diable d'homme*."

The general could think of nothing but his personal position. He seemed convinced that all this was a conspiracy to separate him from his soldiers. As if it mattered to the Prussians who had commanded the Imperial Guard now that it with the rest of the army was reduced to complete impotence! The Empress visibly sympathized with the despair of Bourbaki, of his wife and of his sister. She would not see beyond that, and without waiting for matters to be cleared up, she warned the Prussian Government through Lord Granville and Count Bernstorff, the Prussian Ambassador in London, that M. Régnier was not invested with any warrant, and that she had not given anyone the necessary powers to negotiate. At the same time she asked Prince Frederick Charles to give the necessary authorization for Bourbaki to reenter the lines at Metz. In the meantime the general left for Brussels, where he talked a great deal with the plenipotentiary minister of our new Republic, M. Tachard. After having made us wait several days for his answer, Frederick Charles refused the permission, and Bourbaki at once offered his services to the Government at Tours. This Government was at first much divided whether to accept the offer or not. Crémieux said yes—Gambetta said no! At last they agreed in the affirmative when they were perfectly convinced that Bourbaki, far from conspiring for the restoration of the Empire, had just caused the failure of a plan to that end which was practicable and feasible.

He went therefore to Tours, where he was received with open arms. He had entirely recovered his memory, and he put the members of the Government in possession of the facts of the painful situation of Bazaine. This did not prevent Gambetta from declaring in the bulletins issued to the French people that he had excellent news of "the heroic" Bazaine, and that the army of Metz would hold out indefinitely.

General Bourbaki was still negotiating with Frederick Charles when M. Régnier appeared at Chislehurst. It is not difficult to imagine his surprize and his irritation. On his return from this journey, where he had more than once risked his life, he found his plans overthrown, his precautions useless, his careful arrangements reduced to nothing, his name held up in the English papers to universal contempt as that of an imposter in the pay of Prussia who had used a mixture of the methods of farce and of melodrama to steal Bourbaki away from the midst of his soldiers.

I shared with Mme. Lebreton and M. Léon Chevreau the disagreeable privilege of receiving him.

I said to him: "You were to have gone to the Emperor; you have done nothing of the kind."

"I had no time. I had to deal with emergencies as they came."

"When you showed the photograph as coming from the Empress you knew that you were not speaking the truth."

Régnier laughed brutally in my face.

"If I had told Count Bismarck that my only credentials to him were given me by the tutor of the Prince Imperial, do you think he would have listened to me for a single minute? Come, don't let us be childish, let us

occupy ourselves with serious business. Where do we stand now? Why is not Bourbaki here under my name as we had agreed? Has he told you the conditions of peace?"

I quote the words of this man to show the reader that if he had once gained me over to his beliefs it was not by flattery.

When he learnt that Bourbaki had been either unable or unwilling to repeat a single word of their conversations, he flew into a rage and called him a blockhead.

"Never has France been so badly served since the madness of Charles VI. Fortunately you have my notes. I suppose Her Majesty has read them, and here are others which follow and complete the first."

He returned the next day, again insisting upon seeing the Empress, but without success. As he was disappearing in the park and was already half-way to the gate, the Empress decided to receive him for the first and last time. I ran after him and brought him back with me without telling him for whom I was acting. He believed that he was to have another interview with Henri Chevreau, who was then at Camden Place. When he found himself in the presence of the Empress his presence of mind deserted him for a moment, but he quickly recovered himself.

The Empress said to him with much dignity: "You have asked very persistently to speak to me. I am ready to listen to you. Be seated." But Régnier preferred to remain standing. Then he related what he had done, what he had seen and heard, mingling some follies in his account, but at certain moments speaking with a kind of brutal and convulsive eloquence which, as before, imprest me. He explained the eventual arrangements made with Bismarck.

"The army at Metz was to go out with all the honors of war, to be revictualed and to occupy a large neutral zone. There the authorities, illegally dissolved, would be summoned and reconstituted to ratify the terms of the peace, which would have been previously accepted by the Emperor.

"What would this peace be like? It would be painful but not disastrous, it would cost France much money and some districts of Alsace. It would weaken our already none too strong frontier. But could one hope for better terms after the reverses which we had suffered?" Régnier described the frightful miseries which he had witnessed, the deserted villages, the peasants hidden in the woods, without news, without food, stupefied with terror and despair. He finished by saying: "You will have nothing to do with me? So be it, throw me overboard, but profit by the facts which I have told you and the advice which I have given you. The peace is prepared, you have only to sign it; there is still time, but make haste; each day that passes costs France millions and tears away a piece of her flesh. Remember the inexorable date: Metz will fall on the 18th (October). Madame, save the army and save France!"

"Monsieur," said the Empress, "I blame your conduct, but I render justice to your intentions. There is much truth in what you have said, but unhappily you do not seem to know your countrymen. They will never pardon one who gives up a portion of France; they will always say, and their sons will say after them, that if only they had struggled to the end they would have triumphed; and furthermore, the peace would not be recognized, and after the foreign war we should have civil war."

The interview lasted a long time, and it was more

than eight-thirty when M. Régnier withdrew. The notes which he left in our hands were extremely curious. They revealed the character of the man, which was made up of unexpected contrasts—energy and indomitable activity, courage which recoiled from no danger and no fatigue, and side by side with this ridiculous conceit and childishness; coupled with an astonishing intelligence of certain men and certain things he showed a no less surprising lack of intelligence with regard to other men and other things. What could the Iron Chancellor have thought when Régnier, brought before him for the third time at Ferrières, had declaimed a sort of harangue the exordium of which he had been composing since the morning as he was carried across the plains of Champagne exposed to the bullets of the Prussians and the *francs-tireurs?* An exordium in a philosophical and sententious vein, interspersed with insipid flatteries addrest to the great personage!

Infinitely more interesting than the psychology of this adventurer were the notes which made known the attitude of Bismarck towards the Imperial Government. At first he had welcomed our pretended plenipotentiary with distinction, with favor and with cordiality. Bismarck received him *before* and *after* Jules Favre. He had treated him as the guest of the King, had put a carriage at his disposal, and given him as well all the passes that he needed.

During his second visit to Ferrières (September 28–30) he had been treated with much less distinction; perhaps Bismarck had already got wind, through Count Bernstorff, of the public disavowal of Régnier, but, at any rate, up to the last moment the Prussian Minister had repeated that he was ready to treat if the Empress would offer the necessary guarantees. As for the conditions of peace,

Bismarck had not said a word, except that the Emperor might have had peace after Sedan on condition of a mere rectification of frontiers. It was Régnier himself who had done the talking and suggested a line going from Neuf-Brisach to Deux-Ponts and an indemnity of a thousand million francs. M. Régnier had gone so far as to write in his notes this staggering phrase: "*I* am disposed to cede Savoy and Nice, if necessary, for the sake of keeping our old provinces." Bismarck had not committed himself, but merely said: "Ah! if you had only come a few days ago! Now it is very difficult; however, it is not impossible! But the longer you wait the harder it will become . . . one cannot alter Fate or retrace the stream of time. You cannot prevent things from being as they are."

Régnier was trying to bring Bismarck back to the ground of practical discussion. He insisted on the fact that he had now authority from Bazaine to treat with him; but, as a matter of fact, he had no other credentials than an open letter from the marshal to his wife, in which the former alluded to the negotiations initiated by M. Régnier, which would, no doubt, lead quickly to a happy solution. This was not enough for Bismarck. He had then sent a telegram to Marshal Bazaine, somewhat in these terms, "Does the marshal fully empower M. Régnier to treat in his name for the surrender of Metz?" The evening brought a telegram from Bazaine, "I cannot answer in the affirmative; the town and garrison of Metz are not under my authority." Upon that the Chancellor made known to M. Régnier by Count Hatzfeldt that he could not receive him again, and that consequently there was no further reason for his presence at Prussian headquarters.

A few days after M. Régnier's visit to Camden Place

the Empress had his notes and his passport returned to him.

Thus terminated our relations with this enigmatic personage whom all Europe discust for a fortnight.

The pamphlet with his portrait which he published in English under this sensational title: "What is your name?" had an enormous circulation. In it he informed the public that he was born in Paris in 1822, that his wife was English, that, independently of his property in France, he possest an income of 20,000 francs in England; and that this fact ought, in his opinion, to remove all suspicion concerning him. Were the details which he thus published concerning himself correct? I have never had the opportunity of checking them.

Having roused so keenly the curiosity of the entire world for one or two weeks, Régnier lapsed into obscurity. He came to give evidence at Bazaine's trial at Trianon; but being warned that there was some idea of arresting him, he slunk off before the conclusion of it. It was then that he was condemned to death by judges who knew nothing of the facts nor of the part that he had played. Then silence settled around him, until the day when certain papers thought that they had discovered him in I know not what dark intrigue of which Roumania was the theater. Some years later he died in obscurity at Ramsgate, where he had retired. No one ever spoke of Régnier until one fine day an adventuress at bay, towards the close of a sensational case, threw this forgotten name at the public, and tried to graft a new mystery on to the old one. But no one paid much attention, and oblivion deeper and darker than ever has once more fallen upon Régnier.

I can do no more than raise a corner of the veil.

Even now when I call up the figure of this truly extraor-

dinary diplomat, who appeared suddenly one night at Hastings and vanished with equal suddenness another night at Chislehurst, this man whom no one knew, who had given himself the mission of saving France, and who tried to carry this out by sheer insolence and audacity, I still feel in the dark as to his true motives and his real origin. Whom did he serve? Was he from God or from "the Other," as the exorcists of the Middle Ages used to say? Was he a friend or an enemy? I know not—but this much I do know, that his arguments, his advice, and his prophecies, everything that he had said has been literally verified and justified.

Let me call the attention of all unbiased and unprejudiced minds to the following terrible progression.

When giving up his sword at Sedan, the Emperor could have concluded peace at the price of a war indemnity and of a rectification of the frontier.

On September 20 at Ferrières Jules Favre could have concluded peace by ceding Strasbourg and its environs.

On October 30 at Sèvres the conditions of peace would have been the cession of Alsace and an indemnity of two thousand million francs.

At the end of January the actual conditions of peace involved giving up Alsace, a part of Lorraine, and five thousand million francs.

After that one must perhaps admit that that terrible man Régnier was right when he said that each day lost would tear from France a piece of her flesh; and the writer of this book may not have been so mistaken in joining his feeble efforts to those of Régnier to hasten the conclusion of peace.

But those at Chislehurst were far from thinking thus, and after the return of Bourbaki I was in some ways

practically sent to Coventry. Several members of the household ceased to speak to me. As to the Empress, so soon as she had disavowed Régnier and knew that Bourbaki was at Tours and had been given a fresh command on the active list, she felt free once more and regained her serenity of mind. Duperré seeing this happier mood called her attention to the painful position in which I was placed. She came quickly towards me, her hand outstretched, generous and indulgent as I have always found her.

"I never bear ill-will," said she, "to those who meant to act for the best."

I received my pardon humbly, but I learnt several days later that the Emperor approved of my action and considered it indispensable, in the interests of France, as well as his own, to be informed with absolute certainty as to the fidelity of the Army of Metz and the attitude of Prussia.

"Well, so be it," said the Empress, "if it can be proved to me that King William will give us better conditions than he will give to the Government of National Defense, and, on the other hand, if it can be proved to me that France is at the end of her resources, I shall drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs."

From that time the policy of the exiled Regent entered upon a new phase.

CHAPTER X

THE EMPRESS AND THE CAPITULATION OF METZ

WHEN all the facts of the Régnier affair were known to the Emperor, he concluded from them that if the Prussian Government was indeed sincere in its desire to treat with the Regent, rather than with the Government of National Defense, it certainly was not from any chivalrous feeling towards an unhappy woman or from any personal preference for the Napoleonic Dynasty. He knew better than any other that, even after three-quarters of a century, the Bonapartes had not yet gained a footing in the family of kings and that no one had yet forgiven either their conquests or their democratic spirit. This feeling was more keen and more lasting with the Hohenzollerns than with any others. Had not the King of Prussia at the beginning of the struggle declared that he was not making war upon France but upon her Government? I lay all the more stress upon that declaration because later we shall find Bismarck making an absolutely opposite statement. Thus the Emperor supposed the King of Prussia and his Minister to be swayed by the following two purely selfish considerations: firstly, the danger of letting loose and strengthening the revolutionary spirit, which from France might spread to the whole of Europe, as it did in 1793, in 1830, and in 1848; secondly, the impossibility of arranging a peace with an insurrectionary government which had no regular army at its disposal to carry out the conditions of the treaty and enforce order.

To test the real motives which had dominated the Prussian Government when it had favorably received an adventurer who, as credentials, had brought nothing but the signature of a child on a photograph, the Emperor sent the following telegram from Wilhelmshöhe to Versailles, of which to my great regret I cannot give the exact date, but for the authenticity of which I can vouch:

"According to news reproduced in the German papers Marshal Bazaine is still able to hold out for a long period in Metz. Nevertheless, the situation must end by his being obliged to surrender to the superior forces which surround him.

"In our view the interests of France, if rightly understood, do not here conflict with those of the King of Prussia. Both require that this last army which France possesses should not be destroyed nor made prisoner.

"In the first place the Prussians will not obtain the surrender of these troops without much bloodshed, and they will have, after peace is made, to repatriate this army, which it will have cost them so dear to conquer.

"In the second place, if the Prussian armies enter Paris they will have eventually to negotiate a peace, and the French Government, whatever it may be, which will come after the present one, will be obliged to act with the greatest firmness in order to suppress anarchy, disarm the populace and establish some permanent settlement. Now how can this be done if a more or less organized force is not available? Such a force no longer exists in France outside the army now shut up in Metz.

"The properly understood interest of the King of Prussia, the future interest of reorganized France, both point to the desirability of a military arrangement between

the commander of the army of the King of Prussia and Marshal Bazaine.

"If an armistice were signed extending until the final signature of peace, the French army in Metz would not be allowed to go outside a certain radius from the fortress, but it could be re-victualed and it could send back the wounded and the sick.

"On the other side, the Prussian troops would have to keep at a certain distance from Metz.

"An armistice of this kind which would diminish the evils of war would be honorable and profitable to all parties."

The Emperor received at Wilhelmshöhe from the Prussian general headquarters at Versailles the following answer:

"When peace is concluded between Germany and France the first care of the French general will be, doubtless, to suppress anarchy, to establish a permanent settlement, and in order to do this it is necessary that he should have regular and disciplined forces. But Germany, on her side, must make it her first object to secure the results of a war which is not yet terminated. In granting an armistice to General Bazaine which would permit him to re-victual and to evacuate his wounded, Germany would be giving up the military advantages that she expects from the fall of Metz. To justify such a sacrifice Germany must obtain before she consents to it such guarantees of peace as will assure her in the end such conditions as she considers indispensable. The uncertainty in which we are as regards the intentions of the marshal and the compensation which he proposes to offer for an armistice, from which he would be the only one to derive any advantage,

does not permit us up to the present to pronounce on the suitability of such an arrangement.

"The relations which M. Régnier, after presenting himself at General Headquarters on an alleged mission from Hastings, has established with the marshal have not come to anything because the agent has not been furnished with proper powers by those in whose interests he tried to negotiate."

All this was very clear, and the favorable dispositions of the Prussian Government could not be mistaken. But still the Empress delayed. Why was this? Simply because, like the whole of France and a large part of Europe, she allowed herself to be influenced by the poetical bulletins which the Dictator of Tours scattered broadcast. She believed in the reality of the Army of the Loire; she ardently hoped for a French victory which would have reduced to nothing the chances of a restoration of the dynasty, but which would at once have opened up the prospect of a more favorable peace. She dreamt of a vast sortie of the Paris garrison, of the Army of Metz rallying in a supreme effort and attempting a break-through; or, again, of unexpected enemies forming up behind the Prussians and attacking them in the rear, Italy led by Garibaldi, Austria urged onwards by the remembrance of Sadowa and drawing to her banner all the Germans of the South, who were fighting the French, it was rumored, very unwillingly. Such were the chimerical possibilities which she discust feverishly with us and with all those who came to see her. Those who would blame her for entertaining them know nothing of the mental confusion, the anguish, and the patriotic madness of that time.

At last she made up her mind. After all, it was merely a question of learning the terms offered by the conqueror, or of suggesting alternatives designed to save the national pride and to safeguard the future.

Two persons were sent in turn to the German headquarters. The first of these envoys was an officer who had close relations with the Imperial Family. What he did I do not know. He concealed everything from me with the greatest care, and he has not left any written traces of his mission. But, from some words that escaped Bismarck in later conversations, I think that by reason of his narrow-mindedness and lack of political ability this envoy had injured his cause instead of helping it.

The second negotiator, M. G., had been suggested by M. Rouher, whose confidence he both merited and possest. He was level-headed and tactful and he knew German thoroughly. During the time that his mission lasted at Versailles, M. Léon Chevreau, who took up his quarters in Ghent (instead of in Brussels, which was a center of intrigue and where it was difficult to escape the spies of M. Tachard), held himself in readiness to communicate with him by telegraph and to serve as go-between with Chislehurst. M. G., who was delayed by a thousand difficulties, did not reach Versailles until Sunday the 23d, and was unable to see Bismarck until Monday the 24th. As soon as the first words were exchanged he perceived that he was too late and that his interview with the Federal Chancellor would not and could not have any but an historical and (so to speak) academic interest. It was between the departure of M. G. from Chislehurst and his audience with Bismarck that the real drama had been played out. My account of it will take the form of a quotation from the diary of one of the principal actors,

General Boyer, chief of the staff of the French army of the Rhine. I have not changed a word of it, and I have even retained some notes which evidently served to help the general's memory but which remain unintelligible to me.[1]

"Left Metz Wednesday, October 12, at ten in the morning. Left Ars at eleven o'clock. Was kept part of the night in front of Nanteuil-Saacy, with the line blocked by transport.

"Arrived at Nanteuil-Saacy at six in the morning of the 13th. Left by carriage at midday. Arrived *viâ* La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Meaux, Lagny and Villeneuve Saint-Georges at Versailles at five in the morning, Friday, October 14. Stayed with M. Dagnan, 48, Rue de Satory. At half-past twelve warned that M. le Comte de Bismarck awaited me. Admitted to see the count at one o'clock in the afternoon.

"I tell him, in few words, the object of my visit. When I pronounced the name of M. Régnier the count looked questioningly at me, interrupted me and insisted to know if it was always thus that I designated him, if this was the only name by which he was known to me. I answered that the marshal had never seen him or heard of him before.

"The count then began to speak, and told me that M. Régnier presented himself to him as coming from Hastings and had shown him as his sole credentials a photograph, on the back of which was the signature of the Prince Imperial; that he had then explained his plan, and asked him (Bismarck) for permission to go and sound the marshal in the cause of the Regency, or decide him to take sides for the Regent, since it was in the interests of her Government that his plan was conceived.

[1] Here begins the *verbatim* extract from General Boyer's diary (Translator's Note).

"'That man appeared to me sincere,' said the count, and it is certain that he has behaved as such. He had not confided his project to those at Hastings, where he is in very bad odor and where his services were rejected. He has served the Empress, and it seems that, nevertheless, he has incurred her displeasure so that she will not have anything to do with him.

"The count then told me all his conversation with this Régnier, arriving at the explanation of the telegram that he had sent to the marshal,[1] and he concluded by telling me that the marshal's answer without being absolutely negative proved to him that M. Régnier was in no way deputed to negotiate conditions, and he had therefore been asked to leave headquarters.

"'I had, moreover,' continued the count, 'dispatched this telegram to the marshal chiefly to prove to M. Régnier that I placed little reliance on his conditions, for he had declared to me that the marshal refused to discuss any arrangement which included the town of Metz, and it is Metz that we want above all.'

"The count stopt and I spoke. I told him that I came on the part of the marshal to resume the conversations initiated by M. Régnier; that the marshal had waited a long time, first of all for news, then for the return of General Bourbaki; that the telegram in which there was a question of the surrender of the army outside Metz had greatly disturbed him, and in order to put an end to all misinterpretation and to prove that he had acted and was still disposed to act in good faith, he had asked to be allowed to send me to the headquarters of the King to convey the explanations which I was now giving.

[1] See above, p. 193, for the approximate contents of this telegram.

"I then entered on the subject of the note which had been sent to Prince Frederick Charles. The count listened very attentively. Up to this time we had conversed in an office close to a room where there were a number of clerks. He rose and said to me, 'There are here, close by, people who understand French. Walls, as they say, have ears: let us go into the garden; we shall talk more freely,' and lighting his cigar he led the way.

"Objection raised by the refusal to hand over Metz. The Emperor alone can release General Coffinières.[1]

"Objection raised by the difficulty of holding the army under control once outside the besiegers' lines—may be partly met by causing the army to commit itself openly in favor of the Imperial Regency.

"'Note very carefully,' continued the count, 'that if you cannot control the army your personal situation will become one of extreme danger. Your life, your fortune and your country are at stake, and you are risking exile at the least.'

"He then dwelt on the sentiments which animated Prussia. They were not in the least hostile to the Imperial Dynasty, nor to the form of Government which had maintained order during twenty years. They will treat, on the contrary, more willingly with the Regency than with any other Government, because, in his opinion, it is the form most likely to assure the future.

"'But he could not disguise the fact that it was France who declared war on Germany, and at this moment it is against France that Germany is waging war. The present situation of France does not permit of treating with her Government which offers no prospect of stability, and

[1] General Coffinières commanded the town of Metz, and in this capacity was independent of Marshal Bazaine (Translator's Note).

which in consequence cannot give any serious guarantee of a lasting peace.'

"Bismarck then told me about his interview with the Emperor after the capitulation of Sedan. He said that he sincerely believed that the Emperor would have entered into negotiations, so that he was much surprised when His Majesty told him that, being a prisoner, he had no power and that the Regent was the only person who could treat for peace, 'and from that moment,' added the count, 'I was so thoroughly convinced that it was in the interest of the Regency to open negotiations for peace, that I at once welcomed the overtures of M. Régnier, believing that he came in the name of the Regent, even though it was then rather late in the day.

"'You now bring before me the views and the wishes of Marshal Bazaine. Assuredly the Army of Metz is the only one that remains to France. The Army of the Loire, composed of volunteers, of *Gardes Mobiles*, and of the last regiments that could be withdrawn from Algeria, has just been annihilated at Arthenay and at Orleans. It may have contained twenty-five thousand regular troops. You have no other army, nothing that can come to the rescue of Paris. Paris is, moreover, in such a position that famine alone will probably suffice to reduce it. One does not bombard a city like Paris. All the same, it might be necessary when the time comes to proceed to this last extremity.' Here the count gave me some details of the price of horse-flesh at Paris. He entered at the same time into some reflections on the savage character (outside the customs of civilized nations) which the *francs tireurs* had given to the war!

"'We shall be merciless to these gentry,' he said, 'and we shall kill them all.'

"Returning to the subject of allowing the French army to leave Metz, the count told me that he must concern himself not only with the possibility of maintaining the army in its allegiance, but also with the question of the eventual peace treaty. For, in order to run no risk that, when we have recovered a certain liberty of action, the peace negotiations may break down, it will be necessary for him to have assurances that his conditions will be accepted, however exorbitant they may appear.

"Therefore, some one must go to Hastings or to Cassel so that the two negotiations can be conducted on parallel lines. It seems better that the question should be settled at Hastings, because treating thus in a neutral country the Empress will not appear to be submitting to the pressure of the foreigner. 'Go, then, to Hastings, general,' he said, 'and obtain from the Empress the order for General Coffinières to deliver up Metz since Marshal Bazaine has not the power to do it. That will be already some guarantee for us.'

"He then said that it was regrettable that the fleet had not shown itself favorable to the restoration of the Regency, for as the North and the commercial towns like Rouen longed for order and feared the Republic, it would have been easy with the assistance of the fleet to make Le Havre (which, though showing signs of restlessness, nevertheless wished, on the whole, for order and the maintenance of public prosperity) the pivot of this restoration.

"Here the count added as a parenthesis:

"'It is essential that France should settle for herself the form of her Government. We shall not repeat the error of 1815 by imposing one upon her. And we can see that the present Republican Government is not acting in good faith. It has twice attempted an appeal to the elec-

tors, on October 2 and again on October 16, but it keeps on putting it off because it knows very well that the elections will go against it. The conservative element, which is the strongest in France, does not want this Republic and its terrorism. Be assured that, if a plebiscite were taken to-day the Emperor would still have a big majority.'

"I interrupted the count to say that if he did indeed think thus, and if he was convinced that Marshal Bazaine's army was the only one that remained in France, it was only logical and it was in his own interest, as well as in ours, to set this army free as quickly as possible and in such conditions as to leave to it the moral authority necessary for the work which it proposed to accomplish. He kept on making the same objection, though I assured him that one could rely on the army, or at least on the greater majority of it: there might be partial desertions perhaps, but only solitary instances.

"Pursuing his argument, the count laid before me the present state of France: Paris was in the hands of the Republicans, Lyons was dominated by the extremists who kept the red flag hoisted there; the North was longing to see tranquillity reestablished and had asked that German troops should be sent to maintain order; the West was in the hands of the clergy, who stirred up the memories of Charette and Stofflet to urge the populace to repulse Protestant invaders who had come to annihilate Catholicism; the South had not yet declared itself definitely, except at Marseilles, where the Commune had taken the reins of Government. Of the state of Europe and of its attitude the count said not a word. This Republic of Paris and of Lyons had discouraged even the Americans who had sent a deputation to talk over matters with the Republican Government and to endeavor to mediate.

"'I saw these gentlemen,' proceeded the count, 'who went away saying to me that one could do nothing with such people; that they were madmen who did not even know the meaning of a Republican State. There is only one man among them who is sincere and a true Republican, and he is General Trochu.'

"I protested that the conversion of General Trochu to Republican ideas dated only from the day when the Imperial Government had refused to accept his personal theories and when his ambitions had been disappointed.

"'In any case,' replied the count, 'the Emperor had singularly misplaced his confidence when he gave Trochu the mission of protecting the Empress, the Regency, and the Executive. He has betrayed that confidence, for he had the means of defending the Assembly.'

"'But is it, then, a fact,' I asked him, 'that the elections are not to take place on the 16th?' 'There is a disagreement,' replied the count, 'between Paris and Tours. Crémieux wants the elections to take place, Paris does not. Gambetta even went off in a balloon to see his colleague and try to convince him. He came down at Amiens and reached Tours by the West.'

"I thanked Bismarck for all this information, so valuable to us, and I told him that I wished to make haste to return to Metz and to report to the marshal and receive his orders. 'You understand,' said the count, 'that our conversation must be the subject of a conference between the King and myself. His Majesty will doubtless wish to consult Marshal Moltke and the Minister of War. Tomorrow you will receive the King's answer and then you can go.' I then begged him to send a telegram to Prince Frederick Charles requesting His Royal Highness to inform the marshal that I had only arrived at Versailles that

morning; that I had had the honor of being received, etc. . . . He promised me to do so, then handed me some newspapers to give me information of the situation and took leave of me. It was then four o'clock in the afternoon.

"Towards six o'clock I was informed that the King was about to hold a council that day with General Count von Moltke and the Minister of War.

"(Observation of Count Bismarck relative to the prolongation of the war: 'The war cannot last for ever, but, if necessary, we are ready to take up winter quarters, although we had rather not. We should much prefer to return to our homes which, indeed, we have not left willingly.')

"On the 15th at two o'clock Count Bismarck, who had notified me of his coming an hour before, came to see me in the lodging which had been assigned me and informed me of the resolution which had been taken at the council. He told me that the generals had, as he had anticipated, spontaneously declared that they must insist upon a capitulation in the same terms of that of Sedan, in accordance with military requirements. He had then spoken and pointed out to the King that, without prejudice to military requirements, it was necessary to take into account political and diplomatic interests in the question then before them.

"It was then agreed that all question of capitulation should be put on one side for the moment, and that the object to be aimed at should be to obtain the assurance that the Army of Metz would remain faithful to its oath and constitute itself the champion of the Imperial dynasty. The marshal must make a solemn declaration, or take some open step, by which he would make this well understood in order that the country should know that it could rely on his support if it wished to rally around the Regent.

In this way the army would commit itself to a position which compromised it with the Republicans, and Bismarck would then see the effect produced in France by this declaration. To this must be joined a manifesto by the Empress, who, being then sure of receiving support from the Army of Metz, would appeal to the nation, claim her rights, and ask the French people to confirm them once more by a vote.

"Then only could one treat with any chance of successfully carrying out a plan which would lead to a general peace and which would stop further bloodshed; whereas, under present conditions, everything was highly doubtful. (Interview with Jules Favre, the comedy he played, his bad faith concerning Soissons and Mont-Valérien. The incidents of Strasbourg and of Toul.) The count returned to the opinion of the American generals. 'They have gone off exasperated, saying that they had the impression of having been through a lunatic asylum for monkeys.'

"*Re* telegram from Count Bernstorff stating the Empress's regret for her cold reception of General Bourbaki: the Emperor having remonstrated with her sharply on this subject, saying he had now no one on whom to rely except Bazaine, who had remained faithful, the Empress had replied that she was ready to give the marshal all powers for negotiation, and even to abdicate the Regency of the Empire in his favor.

"'Oh,' I said, 'the marshal would never accept such an arrangement.' 'I should certainly never counsel him to do so,' said Count Bismarck, 'if he asked my advice. It would only complicate matters and divide opinions still further.'

"*Re* letters from M. le Baron Gudin and M. de Lavalette remained unanswered: M. Thiers asked to come; they

let him come. He is at Florence, returning from Vienna after his excursion to Saint Petersburg, where he had been dismissed by the Emperor of Russia with these words: 'If Austria takes any part in the quarrel I will declare war on her immediately.' M. Thiers would be in Florence to treat on the question of Nice, in which Bismarck does not wish to meddle, the question of Rome and of Italy is not his affair.

"*Re* letter from the Comte de Chambord unanswered."[1]

The general returned to Metz with all the haste possible under the circumstances.

The 19th was taken up with meetings between the marshal and his principal officers, to whom General Boyer made a detailed report of all that he had seen and heard at Versailles. Then—with a Prussian safe conduct—he crossed the lines of Prince Frederick Charles's army, bound for Chislehurst, which he reached on the 21st, and where his arrival created a profound impression upon us.

The manners of General Boyer were grave and unassuming. His face just then was pale and haggard with hardship and suffering, and he looked like the ghost of that noble army of which he had been one of the leaders and whose fate he mourned. Seeing him thus our hearts bled. One single thought took possession of the Empress, as it did of all of us; that one must make the very greatest sacrifices to save that unhappy army if there was still time. For some moments that one thought blotted out every other consideration.

The general brought two letters which left no doubt as to the authenticity of his mission, or as to the feelings of the heads of the army.

[1] Here ends the extract from General Boyer's diary (Translator's Note).

The first, signed by the marshal, ran thus:

METZ, *October* 19, 1870.

"MADAME,—It is now some time since I sent General Bourbaki to Your Majesty. Not having received any reply, I send to-day General Boyer, my aide-de-camp, to assure Her of our loyalty. Your Majesty will give him her gracious orders and can have all confidence in him.

"I have the honor to be with the most profound respect,

"Your Majesty's very devoted servant,

"(*Signed*) MARSHAL BAZAINE."

The second letter came from General Frossard, governor of the Prince Imperial and commander of one of the army corps before Metz.

This is the text:

"MADAME,—Since our misfortunes, I have not had the honor to write to Your Majesty to express to Her my devotion and my hopes for the future. The strict blockade that holds us in Metz and which up to the present it has not been possible to break, has prevented all outside communication.

"The army of Marshal Bazaine has kept its organization, its spirit, its discipline and a great part of its strength. It is, as well as its chief and those who command under his orders, entirely devoted to the Emperor, to Your Majesty, and to her august son. It is still the Imperial Army, and we can answer for it. Your Majesty knows the situation better than we do, who have only learnt a few details from General Boyer, returned yesterday from Versailles.

"The Empress already knows, and this general officer will tell her again that the King of Prussia cannot and will not enter into negotiations for peace except with the

Imperial Government as represented by the Regent and backed up by the Army of Metz. For this it is necessary that this army shall be released from the blockade by a military arrangement which shall allow it to retain its unimpaired organization, its arms, its powers of action and its freedom of movement, under the sole condition of not taking any further part in the struggle.

"It would not then act except to support the Government which no one had the right to overthrow, and to maintain that social order which is so menaced in the midst of the internal dissensions to which our poor country is a prey. Your Majesty also knows that M. de Bismarck demands that the Government of the Regent should publicly assert itself and give a guarantee of its good faith, thus showing itself ready and willing to treat for peace.

"Our enemy demands as well that the main conditions of the treaty be accepted by the Regency before the Imperial Army leaves Metz—that is one of his essential stipulations.

"I do not know if he will persist in this demand, but if Your Majesty will permit me to say so, it is very important that She should put herself, as Regent, in touch with the Prussian Government.

"I do not know either what all the conditions of peace may be, but if they are not completely unacceptable I think (with all the chiefs of our army) that Your Majesty will do well to agree to them in order to save the country, which the prolongation of the present state of things is destroying utterly.

"It is only the Imperial Government, believe me, Madame, which can undertake this task and assume this responsibility. Such action cannot injure it, for it is

universally admitted to-day that France cannot avoid the cruel consequences that one sees ahead, and it is in the power of no one to take the cup of bitterness from her.

"Will Your Majesty permit me to implore Her to listen to General Boyer, now sent by the marshal, and to believe his words which reflect the feelings of us all.

"I entreat Your Majesty to believe me to be her most faithful, most devoted and most respectful servant,

"(*Signed*) CHARLES FROSSARD."

The Empress read these two letters and conferred with General Boyer, who thought it his duty not to communicate to her as yet all that he knew of the Prussian demands.

The same day he sent a telegram to Bismarck, through Count Bernstorff. I cannot give the exact terms of this telegram, but I can vouch for the gist of it.

General Boyer informed the Federal Chancellor that he had seen the Empress. She demanded the revictualing of the army for fifteen days, and she asked to be informed as to the basis of the preliminaries of peace. A direct message from the Empress to King William followed and confirmed the telegram sent by General Boyer. The message from the Empress ran thus:

"SIRE,—Your Majesty has in your hands the telegram from Count von Bernstorff to Count von Bismarck. I beg Your Majesty to be favorable to my request. Its acceptance is an indispensable condition if negotiations are to proceed.

"(*Signed*) EUGÉNIE."

Bismarck sent the following reply to General Boyer's telegram:

Photo: London Stereoscopic Co.

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE IN 1870

Photo: W. & D. Downey

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE IN 1889

"VERSAILLES, 11.30 A. M., October.[1]

"To be able to reply I must take the King's orders. I can say beforehand that the re-victualing is, militarily, inadmissible. I refer the matter to General Boyer's own judgment. "(*Signed*) BISMARCK."

Then a second telegram came which enlightened the Empress as to the real thoughts of the King of Prussia and of his councilors:

"The questions put yesterday give neither to the Empress nor to ourselves assurances of any guarantees for peace. The army of Bazaine has not made its *pronunciamiento*,[2] and we should have to obtain by force of arms (and probably against the resistance of the army of Bazaine) the execution of the treaty.

"The King will not treat except under the conditions that I have made known to General Boyer and of which none have been fulfilled. "(*Signed*) BISMARCK."

It was then that General Boyer revealed to the Empress the conditions:

1. Public demonstration by the French Army in favor of the Imperial Dynasty.
2. Proclamation of the Empress to the French people and her departure for France with an undertaking to sign the preliminaries of peace, however exorbitant they might appear, such preliminaries to be made known only in France and to be kept secret.
3. The convening of the Chambers.

[1] Date blank (Translator's Note).

[2] A Spanish word signifying a political proclamation by a military commander. He refers here to the public demonstration on the part of this army, asked for in his interview with General Boyer (Translator's Note).

Bismarck was strangely mistaken if he believed that the Empress would let herself be tempted by a *pronunciamiento;* she remembered far too well how these military *coups d'État* had led to, and achieved, the downfall of her native country to attempt to acclimatize in France these disastrous political ways. Undoubtedly she firmly believed, and in this belief I agreed, and still agree, with her, that not only was the marshal, commander-in-chief of the army of the Rhine, justified in considering himself as being still the subject of the Emperor, in whose name he held his command, but that he was absolutely bound, in honor and conscience, to do so as long as the Sovereign himself or a national plebiscite had not relieved him from his oath.

The first effect of revolutions is to overthrow people's notions of political morality and of legality. They make treason of loyalty and heroism of treason. They place a Trochu in a palace and drag a Bazaine to a dungeon. No one could ask the Empress to accept such reasoning on the morrow of the Fourth of September.

But if she had no scruple in accepting the devotion of the marshal and of his army, she did so only on condition that such devotion was inspired exclusively by the spirit of discipline and by respect for authority based upon universal suffrage. She did not admit that soldiers should be called upon to take sides for or against their commanders; still less did she admit that they should divide into opposing factions and begin a civil war among themselves even before they had finished the war against the foreigner. Only an enemy could have given such counsel.

She read clearly in each line and between each line of Bismarck's his intention and his hope to divide our forces.

She was even more convinced when General Boyer, having now no reason for silence, or for reserve, placed before her eyes the notes that he had made after his two interviews with the Chancellor, with which the reader is already familiar. Bismarck, taking his own desires for realities and the suggestions of hatred for accomplished facts, had represented to General Boyer the feelings of France in the falsest light.

We had no difficulty in proving to the general that the information given by Bismarck was a tissue of lies. No; it was not true that different parties and different districts in France thought differently. No; Paris was *not* starving; the Army of the Loire was *not* a myth. There were no *émigrés*,[1] in the country or out of it. From one end of France to the other Royalists and Imperialists had united to defend their country and had provisionally accepted the Government which had imposed itself by a sudden stroke, but which did not represent a tenth of the electors. Nor did that Government itself, tainted and irregular though it was, consist of a collection of maniacs and brigands, as Bismarck would have made Boyer believe, though he did not himself believe a word of his own statement, since he had been in negotiation with Jules Favre, and was at that very moment negotiating with M. Thiers. The double dealing and deceitfulness of our enemy were therefore manifest.

But where this Prussian machination became absolutely odious, where it took on a character of cruelty hitherto unknown in history, was in the attempt to make the Empress agree to terms of peace without letting her know what they were.

[1] The *émigrés* were those Royalists who went abroad, or aided the foreigner, after 1793 (Translator's Note).

On this point Bismarck had miscalculated even more than over the question of the *pronunciamiento*. He imagined he had to deal with a vain woman who would be ready to do anything for the sake of recovering the crown, which had been the ornament of her pretty head. Far from falling into this trap, the Empress burst out into splendid and flaming anger.

"A blank order! . . . I must give him a blank order, truly! Why, it is our honor they are asking for!"

She had bitter words for the generals in Metz, who, in order to avoid a capitulation, had added their insistence to the injunctions of the enemy. General Boyer hung his head without saying a word, but his humble silence was eloquent. It recalled to the Empress all that those hundred thousand brave men had suffered, who to-day were dying of hunger and who to-morrow would give up their arms and be scattered amongst the German fortresses.

Those days were terrible, and I venture to say that this was the supreme and agonizing crisis of her life. On the Fourth of September her duty was plain; this time she debated in an agony of doubt and anxiety, at one time deciding to break off all negotiations, at another brought back by her own thoughts, or by a word from one of her counselors, to the idea that Prussia was perhaps sincere in her declared intention not to treat with the Republican Government because it had no guarantees to offer, or any organized force by which to maintain order and enforce the acceptance of peace.

To hold back—was it not to give up France to the last horrors of dismemberment and anarchy?

She decided to make a supreme effort, and wrote to Bernstorff:

"Monsieur le Comte,—

"Time is so precious and the go-betweens make us lose so much that I should like to speak personally with you. Lady Cowley has kindly put her house in London —20 Albemarle Street—at my disposal. If you can come there, you can do so unobserved.

"Believe in my best regards.

"(*Signed*) Eugénie."

This interview actually took place. Count Bernstorff declared that he knew the terms of peace as laid down by the King of Prussia, but he refused to communicate them to the Empress without being authorized to do so by his Sovereign.

The Empress could do nothing more except wait for the final answer which the King of Prussia might make to the message transmitted to him by Count Bernstorff, as well as to the letter of which M. G. was the bearer. It was, in fact, at this moment that M. G. was being received by Bismarck at Versailles. The Chancellor told him the facts of Boyer's mission and its negative results.

Again our enemy attributed the failure of the negotiations to the non-compliance with the preliminary conditions insisted upon by Prussia. After Sedan the Imperial Government could have purchased peace at the price of a trifling portion of territory; there was still time, when M. Régnier had come to Ferriéres, and an arrangement was still possible when General Boyer had appeared at Versailles, if matters had been expedited; but during the past eight days events had moved quickly. The fall of Metz was imminent and that of Paris was not in doubt in the minds of the German Staff. And the Chancellor concluded: "It is too late!"

Nevertheless, he did not refuse to listen to the proposals which M. G. had been ordered to submit to him, and I reproduce here all that part of their conversation because the answers of the Chancellor show exactly what were already at this date the demands of the conquerors.

The conditions offered by the Empress, which Bismarck declared he knew already—how and by what means I can explain neither to the reader nor to myself—were the following:

The dismantling of Strasbourg; the establishment of that city as a free town, with a territory to be determined later; pecuniary indemnity; the cession of Cochin China.

"These conditions,[1] so far as they concerned Alsace, did not appear sufficient to M. de Bismarck; they would enable France to take, at some future time, the offensive against Germany, of which the military organization, said M. de Bismarck, was purely defensive.

"I proposed to M. de Bismarck, but subject to reference to my principal, an arrangement by which Alsace should be constituted a neutral State.

"I endeavored to represent to the count that among the people of Alsace the municipal and local spirit was strongly developed, and that under an autonomous régime they would rapidly develop independent habits and sentiments which would effectually prevent any fresh collision between Germany and France.

"Count Bismarck did not believe that such was the spirit of the people of Alsace, and he appeared persuaded that a State constituted in that way would form an outpost for France against Germany, and that no kind of Government would be strong enough to secure or maintain its neutrality.

[1] Quotation from the report of M. G. (Translator's Note).

"In the solution which Count Bismarck wished to see adopted in the case of Alsace—a solution he considers today as entirely in the hands of Germany and outside the scope of international transactions—that province, without conscription, without deputies in the Reichstag, would retain in part its present organization and would be occupied by German troops.

"It would no longer be a neutral Alsace, but a purely Germanic one. An analogous arrangement would be applied to that portion of territory comprising Metz and the places connected with the defense of that fortress. Bismarck affirmed that these losses would not sensibly diminish the French possessions if one took account of the territorial expansions which had taken place during the Empire.

"As to Cochin China, M. de Bismarck said Germany was not rich enough to burden herself with this colony!

"After having delivered himself of this epigram, which was not perhaps altogether unmerited, at the expense of our colonial system, the Chancellor concluded by saying that in view of the continually increasing successes of the German Army, the King could not accept the conditions offered by the Empress without provoking the utmost discontent amongst his subjects of all classes.

"M. de Bismarck appears to be haunted by the idea that, the moment peace is signed, France will think of nothing but revenge, and will make it necessary for Germany to remain under arms for perhaps fifteen or twenty years. It is to guard against this danger that Germany wishes to have guarantees in her own hands, and cannot be content with promises which she recognizes as sincere, but which she fears may be impossible of realization."[1]

[1] This concludes the quotation from M. G.'s report (Translator's Note).

In presence of this attitude, which it seemed impossible to modify, the envoy of the Empress had no choice but to withdraw, after leaving in the hands of Bismarck the letter of his Sovereign to the King of Prussia.

It had been agreed that the Chancellor would let him know if that letter "required further explanation or answer."

After waiting twenty-four hours he returned to Chislehurst.

Bismarck remained like a spider in the middle of his web; he had in his desk a letter from the Comte de Chambord; he had, in some way, forced the Empress to negotiate, and M. Thiers waited his pleasure to discuss an armistice.

Had he (Bismarck) seriously considered for a single instant the idea of treating with any of them? I do not think so; he had but one end in view: to play one off against the other and to urge the different parties into internecine struggles so as to lay France in the dust.

In that hope, fortunately, he was mistaken, as on many other points, and one may have noted, in the preceding pages, the historical and psychological misconceptions, the pitiable moral arithmetic, the vulgar pedantry of this brutal handler of men, whose power was based, not on intelligence, but only on violence and fraud. Moltke, Frederick Charles, Manteuffel and Werder won the game. Bismarck gathered up the stakes.

Meanwhile, General Boyer had arrived at the conclusion that his presence in London had no further object. He applied on the 26th to Bernstorff to obtain the necessary safe-conducts in order to rejoin the Army of Metz.

"Nothing is concluded, why go?" said the Prussian Minister. He added that the conditions of peace would

be much less hard for the Regency than for the Republican Government. He gave Boyer to understand that they would be contented with "quite a small cession of territory."

The same day this same Bernstorff transmitted to the Empress the King of Prussia's reply. It was in these terms:

"MADAME,—Count Bernstorff has sent me by telegram the words which you wished to address to me. I desire with all my heart to bring peace to our two nations, but to arrive at peace it is necessary to establish at least the probability that we shall succeed in making France accept the result of our negotiations without having to continue the war against the entire forces of France.

"At the present time, I regret that the uncertainty in which we find ourselves with reference to the political dispositions of the Army of Metz, as well as those of the French nation, does not allow me to follow up the negotiations proposed by your Majesty.

"(*Signed*) WILLIAM."

Almost at the same time the Empress received from Prince Metternich the following letter:

"TOURS, *October* 24, 1870.

"MADAME,—I am in some sort unofficially commissioned by the Provisional Delegacy at Tours, to ask for your Majesty's cooperation in the present circumstances. As the mission that I have accepted is eminently confidential, I beg you to keep it absolutely secret and arrange that no one shall read this letter; although, indeed, it might well be preserved as a curious document. Those here are

greatly worried concerning the mission of General Boyer to Versailles and to Chislehurst. I have been asked what reception I thought you would give to this envoy from Bazaine in case he proposed to you to treat directly with Prussia in the name of the Regency. I replied that to the best of my belief (1) you had nothing now in view but the welfare of France; (2) that you would certainly refuse to serve as a pretext for new complications, or to do anything that might embarrass the defense; (3) that you would never give your support to negotiations which implied the loss of an inch of territory. All were unanimous in approving my reply. All the information which has been received concerning your patriotic attitude agrees with my assertions.

"Matters have, however, gone even farther. It is said that in the Boyer affair you could render France an immense service by preventing the capitulation of Metz before the conclusion of the armistice which England, supported by the other Great Powers, has just proposed, and I am asked if I cannot, on my own responsibility, suggest this good deed to you.

"It seemed to me that I might do so, and I have thus taken upon myself a mission which is, from the diplomatic standpoint, highly incorrect. This letter will arrive rather late in the day. Possibly the whole affair is less important than one imagines. You may perhaps have already suggested to General Boyer that he should get into touch with the provisional Government, so as to avoid a split.

"However this may be, it is my wish to carry out the errand that only my devotion to your cause and to that of France has made me accept.

"The news from Paris is really good, and the Army of the Loire is no longer a myth. If it were not for the

fear of seeing Metz capitulate, the situation improves daily. Who knows?

"Of your Majesty,
"The most humble servant,
"METTERNICH."

Without a moment's hesitation, the Empress replied by the following telegram:

"CHISLEHURST, *October* 26, 1870.

"The capitulation of Metz is a matter only of hours. They have no food. Hurry on the armistice. I desire intensely to save this last army and bulwark of order, even at the cost of all our hopes. You cannot doubt my ardent patriotism which makes me efface myself to-day, whilst reserving my claim to our rights when peace is made.

"General Changarnier had entrusted General Boyer with a message for M. Thiers. It is unfortunate that they could not meet.

"(*Signed*) EUGÉNIE."

The next day, the 27th, we received a visit which was very unexpected and very surprizing for those who were not in the secret of the situation. M. Tissot, the diplomatic agent of the Government of National Defense, came to Chislehurst to lay at the feet of the Empress the thanks of this same Government. I saw him; he came in walking on tiptoe, with a constrained smile. He was drest in a manner half official, half informal—a black dress-coat and gray trousers, which he doubtless considered in harmony with the unusual character of the step he was taking. His first words to Duperré were almost exactly the same as those of Prince Metternich: "I am charged with a highly incorrect mission."

The Empress did not receive him, which greatly comforted his soul!

But this semi-comic episode disappeared in the emotion caused by the close of the whole tragedy. On this same 27th of October Metz fell.[1] The news was conveyed to the Empress by the following letter from General Boyer:

"LONDON, *October* 27, 1870.

"MADAME,—It is my painful duty to inform your Majesty that the Army of the Rhine and the fortress of Metz capitulated to-day. I have not the strength, under the weight of this terrible blow, to bring in person to your Majesty the fatal letter in which Count Bernstorff tells me this news. To-morrow I shall have the honor of presenting myself at Chislehurst to take your Majesty's orders. Amid this uninterrupted series of reverses which have struck France and the Imperial Family, the unhappy Army of the Rhine will have at least, in its last hour, the consolation of having done its duty to the end, and of having retained the esteem and affection of your Majesty. I have witnessed the efforts that you have made to save it, Madame, and when I rejoin my companions in

[1] I have been greatly surprized to read in the Bernstorff papers, following the text of the telegrams exchanged between Chislehurst and Versailles, two other telegrams, then unknown to me, which M. Henri Welschinger has reproduced in his fine work on the Diplomatic History of the War of 1870. They are dated October 27, 1870. In the first the Empress confers on Marshal Bazaine the lieutenancy-general of the Empire. In the second someone replies that the surrender of Metz is an accomplished fact and that the marshal is a prisoner of war.

I do not dispute the authenticity of these telegrams; I only remark that they do not figure in my collection—they were never brought to me to be copied like the others.

That morning the Empress stopt for a moment by my side in the gallery and said to me: "Do you know what they are now asking? They want me to appoint Bazaine lieutenant-general of the Empire." She passed on without another word, as if it sufficed to merely mention the idea in order to show its absurdity.

arms to take part in their exile my first duty will be to give them that assurance.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"(*Signed*) NAPOLÉON BOYER."

The Empress answered him:

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—I have just received your letter. Broken by grief, I can only express to you my admiration for that valiant army and its leaders. Overwhelmed by numbers, but faithful guardians of the glory and the honor of our unhappy country, they have kept intact the traditions of our old legions. You know my efforts and my impotence to avert a fate that I would fain have spared them at the price of my dearest hopes.

"I expect to see you to-morrow. I hope that you will take a letter to the Marshal. When you rejoin your companions in arms tell them that they have been the hope, the pride and the grief of an exile like themselves.

"Believe, my dear General, in my best regards,

"(*Signed*) EUGÉNIE."

Some days after—it was November 2, the "day of the dead"—there came to Chislehurst a letter from King William, enclosed in one from Count Bernstorff, which was brought by an attaché from the Embassy.

The Prussian Minister excused himself for not having come in person; he believed himself justified, he said, "in thinking that his presence would not be agreeable just now to the Empress." He was charged at the same time to present to her Majesty the excuses of Count Bismarck, who had not written to the Empress, being actuated by a similar feeling of "respectful reserve dictated by the situation."

Here is the letter of the King of Prussia. It was a reply to the one which had been delivered by M. G. on behalf of the Empress on October 24. It was dated the 25th. Why was the letter not delivered to the addressee until a week later? No reason for the delay was forthcoming.

"MADAME,—I have received the letter that your Majesty has addrest to me, and which has evoked memories of the past that I cannot recall without regret. No one more than myself deplores the blood spilt in this war, which, as your Majesty well knows, was not provoked by me.

"From the beginning of hostilities my constant preoccupation has been to neglect no means of giving back to Europe the blessings of peace, if such means were offered by France.

"An understanding would have been easy, so long as the Emperor Napoleon believed himself authorized to treat, and my Government has not even refused to listen to the propositions of Jules Favre, and to offer him the means to secure peace for France.

"When at Ferrières it appeared that overtures were being made in the name of your Majesty, we welcomed them cordially, and all facilities were afforded to Marshal Bazaine to put himself into communication with your Majesty. And when General Boyer came here, it was still possible to arrive at an understanding if the preliminary conditions could be fulfilled without delay. But time has gone by without the indispensable guarantees, necessary for entering into negotiation, being given.

"I love my country, as you, Madame, love yours, and consequently I understand the bitterness which fills your

Majesty's heart, and I sympathize with it sincerely. But after having made such immense sacrifices for her defense, Germany will have to be assured that the next war will find her well prepared to repulse the attack which we may expect, as soon as France shall have recovered her strength or gained Allies.

"It is this sad consideration alone, and not the desire for the aggrandizement of my country, the territory of which is large enough, which forces me to insist on cessions of territory, which have no other object than to push back the point of departure of the French armies which, in the future, will come to attack us.

"I cannot judge if your Majesty was authorized to accept, in the name of France, the conditions which Germany demands; but I believe that in doing so you would have spared your country many evils, and would have preserved it from the anarchy which threatens a nation of which for twenty years the Emperor has succeeded in developing the prosperity.

"Pray believe, Madame, in the sentiments with which I sign myself,

"Your Majesty's good brother,

"(*Signed*) WILLIAM.

"VERSAILLES, *October* 25."

It is hardly necessary, I think, to point out the inaccuracies and the sophistical arguments which form the groundwork of the above letter. It faithfully represented the thoughts of Bismarck, and was perhaps his own work. In any case it indicated clearly the use which the Prussians intended to make of their victory and in what manner they would later tell the story of this war, until such time as

they felt that the mask could safely be dropt, when they exchanged hypocrisy for cynicism.

However it may be, that letter served as the epilogue to the drama. But it was written that in this affair farce was to mingle with tragedy even to the end. At this moment M. Régnier had it announced, with a great flourish of trumpets, that he was off to Wilhelmshöhe! And why? He had all at once remembered that six weeks previously the Prince Imperial had charged him to take to the Emperor certain photographs of Hastings (we already know the use that M. Régnier had made of them), and he went off in all haste to acquit himself of this mission to his captive Sovereign. He disappeared in a peal of laughter.

It was not, however, the only comic episode occasioned by this lamentable capitulation. It is well known that the whole of France at this time was transported with anger against Bazaine, who had been so popular only two months before and whose name was now a byword of scornful insult. The Government of Tours, who had been kept informed of the state of things in Metz by Bourbaki, by the brother of the marshal, and lastly, as we have seen, by the Empress Eugénie herself, after having made a pretense of believing that Metz could offer indefinite resistance, now feigned a generous indignation at the news of its fall.

In the absence of Gambetta they pushed this lugubrious comedy so far as to institute a court of inquiry into the causes of the capitulation of Metz. Gambetta saw the danger and sent them this crushing telegram, which it is well to remember:

"*December* 25, 2.45 P. M., No. 5,183. Gambetta to

Crémieux, Freycinet, Laurier.—Who has formed a council of inquiry to try Bazaine? There is nothing to inquire about. I have not been consulted. I absolutely object and desire you to stop everything. Reply immediately."

There was no longer any question of inquiry up to the moment of the court-martial (more political than military, alas!) at Trianon. This trial took place after the peace and in times of comparative tranquillity, and the judgment was delivered by men whom one had every reason to believe sincere. Bismarck had declared to M. Régnier, if one can believe that person's notes, that on one day only, August 26, from nine o'clock to noon, the marshal might have had some chance of breaking through. I do not know what value can be attached to these words, and even if they were true I am quite incompetent to pronounce whether a besieged general who has thus missed a chance of escape deserves to be shot; but it does not seem to me that an army chief in Bazaine's circumstances is guilty of high treason because he has inquired from the besiegers what terms would be accorded him in the case of surrender and by what means he might avoid capitulation.

The Prussians having let him know that the political and military questions were inextricably mixed, and that the only way of avoiding capitulation was the signing of peace, the Marshal referred the matter to the authority which had appointed him, the only authority known to him; in doing so he was, strictly and absolutely, fulfilling his duty.

As for the Empress, after the fall of Metz, she took no further part in any events relating to the war.

In the month of January, 1871, in a letter to one of her friends, which I have had the privilege of seeing, she said:

"May God give victory to the Army of the Vosges and I shall be consoled for all our misfortunes."

This was her last word, and it was her real thought.[1]

[1] There were still negotiations with the Prussian Government; they continued all through the winter, even after the signing of the treaty of Frankfort. Much more important personalities than those who had played a part in the correspondence of the Empress with King William were mixed up with these negotiations.

I find described in my diary at the time my profound astonishment at these proceedings.

How could one hope to treat advantageously with Bismarck when we had no guarantees to offer?

Whilst the enemy might have considered an arrangement with the Imperial Government when the army of Bazaine was still in being, and one could still believe in the loyalty of the troops taken prisoner at Sedan, such an idea was out of the question after the convening of the National Assembly, after the vote of deposition, after all the available regular forces had been concentrated under the hand of M. Thiers and after the ratifications of the treaty had been exchanged.

The negotiations which I am now mentioning could not have come to anything.

I have not spoken of them, for the Empress—I am glad to say—took no part in them, and I am convinced that she disapproved of them.

CHAPTER XI

LIFE AT CHISLEHURST

NO sooner had the Empress arrived at Hastings than kind messages came from all sides putting various charming residences at her disposal. One offer came from Mr. Nathaniel Strode, a name quite unknown to the Empress. He offered, for the very modest rent of six thousand francs per annum a large and commodious house, its proximity to London making it very convenient for rapid communication either with London or the Continent.

Madame Lebreton and Commander Duperré went to look at it and reported favorably. Mr. Strode's offer, therefore, was accepted, and a few days later the small exiled Court settled down at Camden Place.

Camden Place was a large house of no particular architectural style, built of red bricks which time had mellowed to a reddish brown. It was no older than the early part of the nineteenth century. A short time after it was built a crime had been committed in the very room which the Empress was about to occupy—a mysterious crime, of which the causes and even the circumstances had never been fully explained. The master of the house had been murdered by his servant; it was thought at the instigation of the victim's son. But we did not know these details till long afterwards.

This house replaced a much older building where Camden, the celebrated antiquarian of the time of James I, had lived, and left his name as a legacy to the house.

Two enormous cedars, whose branches waved and rustled close to the house, and which were said to have been planted by the historian, often kept me awake on stormy nights. There was, also, a little edifice hidden in a clump of trees, a hundred yards from the house, which was thought to date from Camden's day. This was an exact copy of the "lantern of Demosthenes" which adorns the summit of a tower in the park of Saint Cloud. In consequence of the accumulation of animal and vegetable rubbish, which has gradually raised the ground around it, the edifice, originally erected level with the ground at the beginning of the seventeenth century, is to-day buried in a kind of pit.

The house has seven windows in the front. The style is most simple, and there are no ornamental features except a big clock, whose gilded hands move over a light-colored dial. Over it is the motto: *Malo mori quam fœdari.*

Two annexes have been added to the main building, with which a wing on the right, containing the usual dependencies, makes a right angle. The whole effect, although somewhat irregular, is pleasing.

On entering the house one found oneself in a large corridor facing a big hall where the light falls from a skylight. On the walls of the hall and along those of the corridor were pictures, busts and cabinets of ebony or tortoise-shell, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, brass, and copper; behind the glass doors of these cabinets were arrayed a vast and heterogeneous collection of objects of very unequal value. At the end of the hall was a huge beveled mirror with a carved and pierced frame. To the right a big gilded timepiece sonorously ticked out the seconds. On the face of this timepiece, which must have dated from the first years of the eighteenth century, to the

CAMDEN HOUSE, CHISLEHURST

First Residence in England of Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie

FARNBOROUGH HILL

Later Home of the Empress

astonishment of everyone but myself, *my* own name could be clearly read. I was able to explain that the timepiece must be the work of my grandfather's grandfather, for my humble ancestors have followed the trade of clockmaker from father to son up to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Empress adopted the custom of having tea served in the hall, and it was here that we awaited the evening papers, which contained the afternoon telegrams, and we discust with some excitement the chances of the war.

When we had forgotten the flight of time in our talk the Empress would be suddenly recalled to the hour by the slow and ponderous striking of the old clock. "Ah! mon Dieu, what says Grandpapa?" she would exclaim, and she would run away to dress. The corridor extended the whole length of the house, going from the dining-room to a big bay window which opened on the garden. A long carpet of red and green squares stretched from one end to the other. On this carpet we were to walk up and down for years, adding the waste of our steps to that of our thoughts and words as we passed and repassed a bust of Machiavelli, whose vicious and ape-like face, with its sharp smile, seemed to mock both our plans and our dreams.

One day at Farnborough, whilst we were walking down one of the galleries, the Empress stopt, and showing me the carpet on which we stood, said: "Do you recognize this? It is the old Camden Place carpet. I made a point of bringing it here. Ah! how many thousands of miles have we walked on this poor carpet which have led us nowhere! Our impatient restlessness has worn it out!"

At one end of the corridor was the big staircase, at the

other were two drawing-rooms, ending in a kind of circular hall, which looked out upon grassy slopes. The walls and the ceiling were covered with gilding and mythological pictures somewhat crudely painted. The fireplace, of colored china, also had a peculiar appearance. I remember Duperré's first comment on that room: "Fine place, this! . . . It looks like a café!"

The Empress rarely used these two rooms. We never had the fire lit in the china fireplace until after the arrival of the Emperor. It was apparently not intended for such a use, for on that occasion it almost flew in pieces.

On the other hand, the dining-room was large and handsome, lighted by immense windows and paneled from top to bottom. These panels, which were all different and composed of the most delicate work, originally came from the Château of the Nicolaï, at Bercy.

Mr. Strode, who possest ancestors of whom he was proud, had had their portraits hung in this room. Amongst these powdered officers and smiling dowagers stood out the vigorous countenance of that Strode who was one of the proudest spirits among the Roundheads and one of the five members whom Charles I went in person to arrest on the Parliamentary benches.

There were three other reception rooms on the ground floor. Two of these were entirely hung with Gobelins tapestry. One of them became the smoking-room, and the other was reserved for the Prince's study.

The Empress occupied a long, vast room on the first floor which corresponded with the large drawing-room on the ground floor. To this room was attached a pretty little octagon-shaped study which she arranged according to her own taste, and which gradually acquired the im-

press of her personality. I remember that I once got an upholsterer to cover with blue velvet the shelves of a little glass-fronted cabinet, in which she arranged carefully the few precious souvenirs that remained to her in the deprivations of the early days of exile.

On her anniversary day, November 15, we gave her a screen formed of gilded trellis-work, over which climbed growing ivy, and she was moved to tears by this humble present which recalled to her one of her favorite possessions of bygone days.

On her writing-table a crowd of little miniatures in open frames looked upon her whilst she wrote.

This room was the only one in which she made any change. In all other respects Camden Place remained as it was. It was meant only as a temporary home, but she remained in it more than ten years.

Madame Lebreton's room was separated from that of the Empress only by a little ante-chamber. The Prince took one of the front rooms, and the rest of us took up our quarters where we liked.

The Park was not very large, but it contained some wild corners and charming views. There were all kinds of outbuildings: houses for the gardeners, lodges for the gate-keepers, greenhouses, kennels, dove-cots, and the big square building containing the stables, which seemed to be of an earlier date than the rest of the house.

For such a home the rent of 6,000 francs was ridiculous. One was tempted to ask oneself why Mr. Strode, a financier by profession, a man who apparently knew the value of money, had made such a bad bargain.

Many people thought that Mr. Strode was not the actual owner, and that his name covered a more illustrious one. It was said that the Emperor Napoleon III had

been for many years the real owner of Camden Place, and had retained it as a possible refuge in case of trouble.

There was no truth in the rumor, but it is probable that Mr. Strode was known to the Emperor and his entourage long before the Fourth of September, for I found in an empty cabinet a portrait of M. Mocquart, which had evidently been given to the owner of Camden Place by the Emperor's late secretary. Perhaps these relations dated from before the Empire. These points have never been cleared up.

What is certain is that Mr. Strode had intended to live at Camden Place whilst the Empress resided there, and to act as host. We had therefore his company, as well as that of his friend and agent, a certain Mr. Fodor, in the house and at table, from morning till night.

Some days after our arrival Mr. Fodor was killed in a carriage accident on the road to Eltham. As for Mr. Strode, who was indeed a very amiable and excellent fellow, a hint was given to him that, however well meaning his hospitality might be, his continual presence was a little trying in our sad circumstances. He took the hint in good part, and after that we saw him only on Sundays.

From the very first day of our arrival a small colony grew up round the Empress. Dr. Conneau had joined us, bringing with him his son Louis, the faithful friend of the Prince, who came, at Chislehurst as at the Tuileries, to join in his studies and his games. Mademoiselle de Larminat again took up her post as Maid of Honor. The Aguados settled in a house called "Old Borough," on the other side of the Common. Comte Clary rented "Oak Lodge," just outside the Park, for his wife; the Duc de Bassano, the Comtesse Davillier and her daughter, Madeleine, established themselves in neighboring houses.

Apartments were arranged in the group of stable buildings for Madame de Saulcy and her daughter Jacqueline. M. de Saulcy remained in Paris, and joined them after the siege was raised.

The Duchesse de Mouchy, her brother Prince Achille and the Princess Salome remained in London. The Duchesse de Talleyrand, the Duchesse de Tarente, the Jérôme Davids, the Comte de Bouville and Clément Duvernois were also in the metropolis. The Rouher family had settled at Richmond, as had MM. Albert and Léon Chevreau. Thus there was a continual coming and going of visitors at Camden Place, which gave it, if not an appearance of gaiety—which would have been out of place—at least an appearance of animation.

On March 20, 1871, the Emperor arrived at Chislehurst, bringing with him Comte Davillier, Baron Corvisart and M. Franceschini Pietri, all of whom remained with him to the end.

From this time a voluntary service of aides-de-camp and chamberlains organized itself round his person, and the comings and goings became more numerous and more frequent.

It would be impossible for me to name the visitors who succeeded each other without interruption during the years 1871 and 1872; the list would more than fill up this book. The visitors were the survivors of the Imperialist political group, two or three absent turn-coats excepted; and there were many great names belonging to the two nobilities;[1] there were also artists, writers, and a veritable swarm of journalists.

The English showed great sympathy towards their old

[1] The old nobility had its titles from the Bourbons; the new nobility from the Napoleons (Translator's Note).

ally. He had been loudly cheered at Dover as soon as he set foot on English soil, and he was cheered again in London when he attended the thanksgiving service for recovery of the Prince of Wales, whose life had been despaired of.

Government circles, however, stood somewhat aloof, and Mr. Gladstone waited a long time before he paid his first visit to Camden Place.

The aristocracy, who had not the same need for caution, showed nevertheless but little sympathy with the exiles in spite of the example given them by the Queen, who in this case, as in all others, displayed what I can best describe as her moral stedfastness. Under the Empire she had treated the Orleans Princes with all the consideration which was due to them, and far from hiding this from Napoleon III, she had very frankly pleaded their cause with him. In just the same way, after the fall of the Empire she did not change, either in her sentiments toward the exiles, or in the exterior respect which she showed them. Her first visit to Camden Place was in the spring of 1871.

The Emperor himself drew up a note telling of this visit, which I was ordered to send "after revising and correcting it" (for in his idea it was only a rough draft) to our friends of the Press.

I have kept the text of this note, which is very difficult to decipher for those who are not familiar with the writing, which was nearly as irregular and badly formed as that of the Founder of the Dynasty.

In this note the Emperor first gave an idea of the house, the country in which it was situated, and of the profound peace which ordinarily reigned there. He continued:

"Last Saturday the locality we have described had changed its aspect. The Queen came to pay a visit to Camden Place. The entire space between the station and the park gates was filled with a multitude of carriages and pedestrians, drawn thither by the wish to acclaim their Sovereign. At 4 o'clock the train entered the station of Chislehurst. The Queen, Prince Leopold and Princess Beatrice got into their carriage harnessed with four gray horses, and drove to Camden Place. In another carriage were Lady Ely and Lady Waterpark. Lord Alfred Paget on horseback escorted the Queen's carriage.

"When she arrived at the entrance of the house the Queen was received by the Emperor, the Empress and the Prince Imperial, and according to custom she embraced her august hosts warmly. The Emperor and the Prince respectfully kissed the Queen's hand.

"After having remained half an hour in conversation, the Queen was shown into the first drawing-room, where she addrest a few words to those who lived at Camden Place with the Emperor, and she then departed in the same order in which she had come.

"One must say that the attitude of the crowd, many of whom had come from a great distance to see the Queen, made it plain that not only did they wish to show their respect for their Sovereign, but also that they approved the action of the Queen, who, although only lately returned from a long journey, had not hesitated to make this effort to come and give actual proof of her sympathy with the exiles of Camden Place."

This was the first of a long series of Royal visits, first to Camden Place and, later, to Farnborough.

The friendship of Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugénie was to last another thirty years without any

cloud coming to cast a shadow over it. They were very different in character and habits, and time rendered the contrast more striking. The Queen was hard-working and methodical, desirous of housing facts in her brain and marshaling them in good order; the Empress was impulsive like all her race, but incapable of continuing any regular routine, quick to perceive a truth which might have escaped better-trained eyes, yet losing sight of it again after much reflection and discussion: the one woman was very reserved, the other was very imprudent, but both were incapable of deceit; they had reached the age when one esteems sincerity above everything.

Lord Sydney lived for a part of the year at Frognal, two miles from Chislehurst. In his position as Lord Lieutenant of Kent, he felt himself bound to extend some measure of hospitality to the Imperial family.

He and Lady Sydney often came to Camden Place. We also saw there Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl de la Warr, an excellent man, chiefly known by his efforts in philanthropic legislation; Lord George Cavendish, who also lived at Chislehurst; and Lord Frederick Cavendish, that noble and unfortunate young man who was murdered by scoundrels in Dublin on the very day when, full of the most generous intentions, he was coming to take up his post as Chief Secretary for Ireland; Lord Henry Lennox, one of the last of the "dandies," whom it was the whim of Disraeli to make into a statesman; old Earl Russell, the sometime hero of the Reform Bill of 1832, who had by now lost all influence or even connection with his old party.

I had the honor of receiving on their first visit to Camden Place, Dr. Tait, the Primate of England, and Mrs. Tait. Among journalists, the owner of the *Morning*

Post, Mr. Borthwick, afterwards raised to the peerage under the name of Lord Glenesk, was one of our most frequent visitors. We also often saw a writer of quite a different type, the principal editor of *Lloyd's News*, Blanchard Jerrold, who has since written a life of Napoleon III in four volumes.

No English lady was more welcome than Madame d'Arcos and her sister, Miss Minnie Vaughan. Madame d'Arcos, who belonged by birth to one of the oldest Catholic families in England, had married Domingo d'Arcos, a friend of the Empress from childhood. The Empress treated Madame d'Arcos as a trusted friend, and her devotion, her reliable and charming character, rendered her worthy of this affection, and the passage of years only strengthened their friendship. It was never closer than at the moment when it was interrupted by death.

In addition to all these visitors, both French and English, who came, led by loyalty or sympathy, there were others whom we had great difficulty in keeping away.

There exists a special race of adventurers and intriguers, male and female, who rise to the surface, no one knows from what depths, in the wake of revolutions, and who besiege the homes of exiled Princes in order to trade on their hopes, their memories, their patriotism, and even their most generous feelings.

A writer of the lowest class, yet not without talent, who claimed to have cried "Long live the Emperor" on the Fourth of September at the door of the Tuileries, came to offer us, or rather to force upon us, his services, and constituted himself the champion of Imperialism abroad. The whole thing finished with a disgusting attempt at blackmail, which was received with the scorn it merited; but

the Government of M. Thiers received the renegade and bought his "secrets" at a price greatly beyond their value.

The sweepings of the old secret police, the men who had made their living out of political plots as genuine as the romances of Gaboriau or Ponson du Terrail, continued to weave around us dark and childish intrigues. Which were faithful? Which were traitors? I really could not tell.

Some of the Communists tried to enter into relations with us, asserting that they had entered into the Communist movement only to serve the cause of an Imperial Restoration, but they received no encouragement.

To this period belongs the fictitious jewel robbery. Many people living in different parts of France (among the number were some who occupied positions of political importance) had received letters from an unknown correspondent who stated that on the eve of the Fourth of September he had been charged by the Empress to take into Spain, and place in the hands of the Comtesse de Montijo, jewels to the value of several millions.

After the Revolution, the messenger, fearing detection, had buried a part of this treasure near X (here followed the name of some locality which was different in each letter). Then, on his arrival in Madrid empty-handed, he had been arrested for some petty debt. Upon receiving the small sum necessary to liberate him, he was ready to return to France to dig up the jewels, which he offered to share with his correspondent. As proofs of his good faith he added to these communications various documents, a plan of the locality, a list of the precious objects, with a forged signature of the Duc de Bassano and a stamp of the Imperial Chancellor's office; lastly a letter purporting to have been sent by the Empress to her mother, written in terms which were absolutely vulgar and grotesque.

This fraud, impudent and coarse though it was, deceived quite a number of people.

We received innumerable letters on the subject. The majority of our correspondents put themselves absolutely at the disposal of the Empress to help her to recover her own; others, in mysterious tones, gave her to understand that they were ready to enter into negotiations for revealing this important secret.

More than one person made the journey to Chislehurst with this end in view. In the meanwhile, the authors of this swindle (who were, actually, in prison in Madrid) were enjoying a fine time with their dupes' money, which had apparently reached them without the least difficulty.

The correspondence relative to the stolen jewels took up an enormous amount of my time. I also received, with prepaid stamps for my reply, letters from some enterprising Yankee, who proposed to "show" the Emperor round the principal towns of America; he offered a big sum down, all expenses paid in the best hotels, and a good commission was promised me if I brought off the affair!

A minister of some dissenting body invited the Emperor to attend an evening discourse, where he proposed to prove out of the Bible that he (Napoleon III) was identical with the Antichrist mentioned in the New Testament.

The Emperor sent me to this meeting, which was held in a dirty music-hall in Westbourne Grove. On my return he listened, half saddened, half amused by the recital of the follies I had heard.

Under the Empire it often happened that individuals who had lost their reason would present themselves at the Tuileries to speak to the Emperor or the Empress. The

"lunatics of the *guichet de l'Échelle*"[1] always constituted an indispensable item in the "latest news" corner of the Paris papers.

The demented souls did not abandon us in exile, and they bombarded us with their letters. Two of them were particularly persistent; these were "the son of the Empress and the Comte de Chambord" and "Marie-Jeanne-des-peuples." The person who took the latter name was a young woman of a very distinguished and honorable family, and although insane was apparently not under control. She declared that from her and the Emperor would be born the savior of France! As to the other lunatic, who must have written alternately to Frohsdorf[2] and to Chislehurst, he mingled his heartbroken and delirious appeals with political considerations of the most comical kind concerning the immense advantage of combining in his person the authority of the plebiscite and the prestige of the legitimate Bourbons. At the same time he referred in the most delicate and feeling terms to the person and the situation of the Prince Imperial, his "half-brother" (!), and he gave hints full of vague promises of which a diplomat might have envied the prudence and cleverness.[3]

The Emperor worked in a tiny study on the first floor,

[1] One of the entrances to the Tuileries. *See also* p. 144 (Translator's Note).

[2] The residence of the Comte de Chambord (Translator's Note).

[3] The Emperor and Empress used to give me these letters, of which I had made a curious collection. The voluminous packet which bore the inscription, "Letters of maniacs, male and female," was for a long time in my house locked up in a cupboard. It disappeared at a time when illness prevented my looking after my papers. Perhaps it will re-appear some day, brought to light by some pseudo-scholar who will think he has made an historical discovery. A Dumas of the twenty-second century will put into romance the sufferings and adventures of the son of the Comte de Chambord and the Empress Eugénie, just as the Dumas of the nineteenth has already related those of the brother of Louis XIV.

close to his bedroom, where there was little room for anything besides his desk and his armchair. On the wall in front of him was a trophy formed entirely of arms: rifles of many different makes, some of them very curiously wrought. On his left was an enormous cupboard in which he kept his most precious papers.

At the bottom of this cupboard were laid enormous folios containing all the letters of his youth and the unpublished correspondence of various members of the Imperial family; lastly, a big volume bound in red which contained—and still contains—the memoirs, also unpublished of Queen Hortense.

When M. Franceschini Pietri was absent, the Emperor employed Count Davillier, Count Clary, and myself to copy the pages of a memoir on the military operations of 1870, and to correct the proofs when they came back from the printer. He allowed me to submit alterations to him, and I have never had a pupil or student during my career as a teacher who accepted with more simplicity, good feeling, and gratitude the corrections which I proposed, than did the Imperial author of the "Life of Cæsar." I was almost taken aback by his promptitude in approving my suggestions.

On one point, however, he never gave way; he would never fix responsibilities on others. One day I took the liberty of pointing out to him the contrast between the perfect clearness of his oral explanations and the obscurity of his writing. He replied with a sad smile: "It is because I wish to justify myself without accusing others" —a difficult task, even impossible, as he came gradually to find out.

I long possest a sheet of paper, the sight of which moved me strangely, written in the Emperor's hand,

mangled and cut up by a hundred erasures. It was a page in which he described the battle of Sedan, and it carried the marks of those generous scruples which had agitated his soul whilst writing the account. This page unfortunately disappeared from my papers in some unaccountable way.

The Emperor also busied himself with the invention of a new mortar, which was to have been another big improvement after the mitrailleuse, but at the time of his death the invention had not got beyond the first stages.

He installed a turning-lathe in front of one of the windows in the billiard-room, and he often set it working to replace by this exercise his "constitutional" walk when the weather was unfavorable. I have two egg-cups that were turned by the Emperor at this time, which are very gracefully fluted.[1]

The Empress was wont to make her first appearance at luncheon. By this time she had usually received a heap of letters, and glanced through a dozen newspapers, English or French.

It was she who kept us posted up in the news which she discust with the one or two visitors who had arrived from the Continent either the night before or the same morning.

The Emperor, no less reserved at Camden Place than at the Tuileries, put in a word here and there, and kept politics out of the discussion when he thought it desirable to do so. The afternoon was the time devoted to audiences. The Emperor usually gave them whilst smoking his cigar, or walking up and down the corridor with slow

[1] It was not the first time that Napoleon III essayed the work of a turner. At Saint Cloud in the drawing-room, through which one passed from the dining-room into the garden, there was a chair which he had made entirely himself.

Photo: W. & D. Downey

NAPOLEON III AND THE PRINCE IMPERIAL IN 1871

Photographed soon after arrival in England

and rhythmical steps, and that swaying motion from right to left which illness and age were making more languid and heavy.

The Prince went out as in France, from two to four, often on horseback with his aide-de-camp and Louis Conneau; with him sometimes went his two cousins[1] and the faithful Démolliens, the groom, who, under the orders of old Bachon, had from the earliest days supervised the Prince's education in riding, acted as escort.

The horse ride was sometimes replaced by an excursion to various places of interest. I remember a visit to the Tower of London in company with Princess Metternich and the Duchesse de Mouchy, and a delightful day at Knole, near Sevenoaks, where, among many curious souvenirs, there are so many beautiful works of art. It was there that the Prince first became acquainted with the work of Reynolds and Gainsborough.

Lord Sydney took him to Westminster, acting as cicerone; and it was the Speaker himself—Mr. Brand, if I recollect rightly—who explained to him the customs of Parliament.

By the Queen's invitation he was present at a review near Hampton Court.

Another day he went to a rural fête at Farningham, where there is an agricultural colony something like our Mettray; there he said a few words expressing his interest—it was his first speech in English. Thus, little by little, he was initiated into English life, and he entered into relations with all classes.

The Empress also would sometimes make excursions near or far during the afternoon. I accompanied her on an interesting visit to the prison at Woking, where she had

[1] The nieces of the Empress, already mentioned (Translator's Note).

as guide Colonel Du Cane, Inspector-General of this service. She was recognized there by an unhappy Frenchman, an old soldier of our army in Italy, who was expiating, by I know not how many years of prison, the crime of having taken a pair of boots from outside the door of a room in an hotel! The Empress obtained the man's pardon.

Another day I went with her to the Jesuit church in Farm Street. Whilst she was in the confessional someone began to improvise on the organ, and I was told that it was Gounod. This incident imprest me greatly, so much so that I used it later in one of my novels.

At five o'clock tea was served, at first in the hall, and later in the little drawing-room. We often forgot the time and talked on, sometimes until close on 7 o'clock (the dinner hour), and then everyone fled in haste to dress as the gong in the corridor announced the first summons to dinner.

Dinner over, the men went into the smoking-room, and from there to billiards. The ladies settled themselves round the table in the large drawing-room. The Comtesse Clary, Madame Lebreton and Mademoiselle de Larminat used to busy themselves with needlework. Dr. Conneau and the Duc de Bassano played patience. Very often the Emperor would do the same. Or else he would sit and muse in a big armchair near the porcelain fireplace, wrapt in a cloud of cigaret smoke.

When no stranger was present and there was no important topic to discuss we talked little, and the silence was broken only by the patience players, who mutually accused each other of dodging.

From the billiard-room came the sound of the ivory balls furiously clashing against each other. "There," said

the Emperor, "that must be Corvisart making a cannon!" Or else a hint of some refrain, or a scrap of Offenbach floated in from the hall, where the young people were grouped around the grand piano. At half-past nine the Prince went to bed, and I said "Good-night" to him after being present at his prayers.

At eleven o'clock the Empress rose and from the doorway, as of old at the Tuileries, she acknowledged by a curtsey our profound obeisances.

This curtsey she performed with supreme elegance; and this exquisite curtsey, of which she had made a work of art, charmed our eyes at Farnborough as well as at Chislehurst up to the day when age and its infirmities intervened. It was the last and only vestige of Imperial etiquet which the Empress retained in her exile.

It makes me smile to find myself—having known so many sad misfortunes and sorrows—mourning over the Empress's curtsey! Yet that curtsey meant so much! It was the symbol of so many vanished graces and splendors!

The Emperor and Empress never went out in the evening. The Prince often went to the theater. We went with him to hear Patti at Covent Garden and Nilsson at Drury Lane; we also saw Irving and Miss Bateman in *Charles I*, which was one of the illustrious actor's greatest successes.

On Sundays the order of the day was a little different. The Emperor and Empress went on foot to the Church of St. Mary to hear high Mass, and returned in the same manner across the common. This afforded the French in London a chance to see the exiles, and they would gather in groups on the road to salute them. The Catholic priest was an Irishman named Father O'Connor, an excellent

man, with rather brusque manners. He was soon changed for another priest who spoke French very well, having been in the seminary at St. Sulpice. Father Goddard, who was made Prelate of the Chamber by Pius IX, and confirmed in that position by Leo XIII, whilst still retaining his parish of Chislehurst, used to come to lunch at Camden Place after Mass.

After lunch the dining-room was transformed into a fencing gallery, and the worthy fencing master, Bertrand, would arrive from London to preside over the meeting, where I have seen at practice swordsmen of great repute, such as Bartholony and Féry d'Escland. The 3 o'clock train brought a veritable crowd of friends, and the rooms soon became full. One day Madame Nilsson sang in the hall throughout the afternoon; another time Sullivan, introduced by Madame Conneau, improvised for hours on the piano. Patti came also, but as the Marquise de Caux, and her voice was never heard at Camden Place. When the weather was fine tea was served on the lawn; brightly drest ladies rustled their skirts gracefully over the grass, parasols waved, and the sound of feminine voices rose like the chattering of an aviary across the branches of the old cedar planted by Camden.

Such was life at Chislehurst, and, as in all other groups of human beings that are brought together by circumstances rather than choice, there were amongst them divergencies of thought, rivalries, and antipathies which beneath the outwardly calm surface produced whirlpools and eddies. There were some who could not understand one another, and others, perhaps, whose hearts were too well attuned for their own comfort and happiness. But these things are not for the world's ear, and I sometimes take a strange and melancholy pleasure in musing over

many secrets which will die with me. It is, however, my duty to say that during those last hours of married life perfect sympathy and understanding existed between the Emperor and Empress.

I have said that after the revolution of September she gave him back her old affection; I will now justify this assertion. When the Empress knew the details concerning the fatal first of September, when she knew the real truth about the man branded by his enemies as "the coward of Sedan," she forgot all that she had felt and said in the wild excitement of the first shock. She forgot it all as completely as a man forgets what he has said or done in a condition of madness or intoxication. One of the witnesses of these painful scenes remembered them, and the Empress was profoundly astonished and deeply grieved. It happened thus. Admiral Jurien wished to give to the readers of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* an account of the happenings of that terrible month during which the Empress had been in some manner confided to his care. His intention was to bring out, careless of injury to anyone soever, the fine traits of that character which he admired so profoundly; her courage, her self-abnegation, and her patriotism. But in these loyally meant revelations he had made some imprudent or premature disclosures, and passed eulogies which could not but be maliciously misinterpreted by the special public for whom the article was intended.

The Admiral sent his manuscript to the Empress at Camden Place to assure himself that he had not exceeded the limit which seemed to her discreet. She studied the manuscript and made various observations, which she asked me to put in writing and transmit to the Admiral with an explanatory letter. I have kept the rough copy of this letter, and I find in it this significant passage: "If

among these observations there is one that above all others touches Her Majesty's heart, it is that which concerns the Emperor and the feelings which she has never ceased to entertain for him. The thought that your account represents her as having imagined for one instant that the Emperor was unworthy of her fills the Empress with sorrow. She would prefer the most cruel insults of her enemies to such an appreciation from a friend." At the bottom of her heart perhaps she reproached herself for having doubted the Emperor for a moment, and set off this wrong she had done him against his own offenses towards her.

In the autumn of 1870, accompanied by only one person, and with the utmost secrecy, she went to Wilhelmshöhe and remained only a few hours with the prisoner. Some days after her return she said to me, "No one really knows the Emperor. They fancy that he is impervious to all emotions because his manner is cold and reserved. They do not know him. . . . When I arrived he received me quite calmly and maintained absolute self-control so long as strangers were present, but when we were alone! . . ." She said no more, but her tone let me imagine the loving embrace with which he had retaken possession of her heart, the last treasure and the only Empire that were left to him.

One evening at Farnborough many years after we were sitting round the table where the Empress usually sat after dinner. She happened to come across, and she read aloud to us, a certain article in a newspaper which mentioned the profound affection that the Emperor had never ceased to feel for her. Her eyes filled with tears and her voice shook. She could not continue, and she passed the paper to my wife to finish reading the article.

We felt that night that, in spite of the Emperor's moral weaknesses from which she had suffered so much, she knew that he had really loved her, and that the recollection of that love, which had brought her such vicissitudes of destiny, was now unmixed with bitterness.

I was staying with my relatives in the summer of 1871 when September brought the painful anniversary. The morning of the 4th brought me a letter from the Empress which began thus:

"I would not like this sad anniversary to pass without recalling to your remembrance, my dear Monsieur Filon, the hours of anguish and grief that you have shared with me last year. You have, by a devotion proof against all trials, softened many things, and I want to-day to thank you for it. The hours which have still to drag out their length before to-morrow's dawn will wake in me as an echo a pain now more or less allayed, but a sorrow ever present. All seems to come back and to live again. I long now—as I did then—for to-morrow to be here; better still, for forgetfulness, without which there can be no forgiveness. So long as memory brings back one's past feelings, one derives no comfort from the passage of time. I leave to-morrow; will my thoughts change with my surroundings?"

I have quoted this letter to show with what kindly attentions she recognized and encouraged the devotion of those around her. Shortly after writing this letter she went to Spain, whilst the Emperor took a holiday at Torquay, on the coast of Devon.

I came back to Camden Place when he returned there with his son. I found the Emperor very busy reconstituting the Empress's library, which had disappeared when the

Tuileries was burnt down; he wanted this new library to be a surprize for her on her return.

We helped him compile the catalog, and he arranged the books, of which the bindings were exactly similar to the old ones and bore the "E" surmounted by a crown, stamped with the die which had been luckily rediscovered at Fontaine's shop in the *Passage des Panoramas*. The new books were all put into elegant glass-fronted book-cases, which, placed at a convenient height, adorned the large drawing-room.

The Empress returned from Spain in December, and life at Camden Place was resumed on the lines I have described. The Prince during the whole of this year 1871–1872 studied at King's College, London, with his friend Conneau; this necessitated his going to town almost every day.

In the summer of 1872 the Empress went north. She took her son to Scotland and then returned to join the Emperor at Brighton. There they were so much bothered by the curiosity of the crowd that they were glad to take refuge at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, where they found some kind of privacy.

After spending a few days in an hotel the little exiled Court took up its quarters in two houses situated almost at the end of the Parade; that in which the Prince lived had the queer name of Pao-Shun, which its owner, an old admiral, had no doubt given it in remembrance of some voyage in the Far East.

I had selected for my study a tiny room, entirely papered with marine charts, from which one had a view of the whole of the Solent. The worthy admiral sitting there might well have fancied himself on board his own ship on a voyage round the world. The Prince tried to

cultivate a similar illusion, and I seized this opportunity of improving his geography.

September was a beautiful month that year and life passed pleasantly at Cowes. The Prince was much fêted by the children of the Earl and Countess of Harrington, whose simple and cordial hospitality put everyone at their ease.

Baron Henry de Worms, who had been one of the most distinguished pupils of our *Collège Rollin*, and who, after being President of the Board of Trade, was raised to the peerage, taught the Prince to swim and tried to amuse him in a thousand ways.

The Prince, too, had found companions of his own age in the young Exshaws, whose grandfather, M. de Richemont, had been a Senator of the Empire.

Two or three young and very charming American ladies introduced an atmosphere of gaiety and innocent flirtation into this youthful group, which was beginning to soften to feminine influences. Every day brought something new. One afternoon there would be a tennis party at Carisbrooke Castle, near the window by which Charles I had vainly tried to escape from his jailers; another time we would be invited on board one of the yachts for a few hours' cruise.

One day one of those yachts which wander about all the summer dropt anchor in the Cowes roadstead. It belonged to the Baroness Meyer de Rothschild, who had made it her home, convinced that life on the sea was her only chance of health in view of a disease that threatened her life. The Prince was invited to visit the yacht and spend a day on it with his cousin the Duke of Alva.

I shall always remember the dignified bearing and the melancholy air of the Baroness. She lived in the sad

anticipation of impending death. Her daughter Hannah de Rothschild (since Countess of Rosebery) surrounded her with every loving care, and received her visitors with a mixture of simplicity and reserve which greatly impressed me.

The Emperor seldom left the house, and the Empress rarely left the Emperor.

They returned to Camden Place in the first days of October, and Napoleon III's health became so much worse that a momentous decision became necessary.

CHAPTER XII

JANUARY 9, 1873

THE Emperor had been ill for a long time, but he deceived himself as to the nature of his malady and refused to undergo the medical examination which was indispensable.[1] When he eventually submitted to this, the Prince Imperial had just taken up his quarters with me at Woolwich, where he followed the course at the Royal Military Academy, and the Emperor himself announced the result of the consultation to his son in a brief note, the text of which will be found in my book on the Prince Imperial.

This letter, which was intended to reassure the Prince, was far from giving an exact idea of the situation. In reality Sir William Gull and Sir James Paget had diagnosed the presence of a stone in the bladder of which they could not exactly determine the size nor the consistence. They had recognized that this was a very grave case of long standing.

[1] Dr. Germain Sée was the only physician, it seemed, who had, previous to the year 1870, formed a correct diagnosis of the malady. He had exprest his opinion in writing and delivered this diagnosis signed, and in a sealed envelope, to the head physician. He was convinced that the communication had been given to the august patient. On the death of the Emperor this diagnosis could not be found among his papers. On Prince Napoleon questioning Dr. Conneau and asking what he had done with it, the doctor replied: "I have given it to the proper person." What did he mean? Prince Napoleon concluded that "the proper person" was the Empress. This amounted to accusing her of having concealed, not only from the public but from the Emperor himself, the only really useful advice which, by insisting on the need for an immediate operation, might have prolonged his life for several years. Alfred Darimon made this accusation public, and perhaps to this day certain people regard it as established. However, nothing could be more untrue. The Empress had no knowledge whatever of this opinion of Dr. Sée's, which, on the death of Dr. Conneau, was found in one of his drawers with its envelope intact, just as he had received it from Germain Sée.

"What!" said Sir William to Baron Corvisart, when coming out of the sick-room, "did that man actually endure five hours on horseback on the field of battle at Sedan? He must have suffered agonies!"

It was decided that an operation should be attempted, and that it should be entrusted to Sir Henry Thompson, whose reputation as a surgeon was very great. The operation took place on the second of January. On this occasion the doctors were only able to extract a tiny portion of the stone, but they satisfied themselves that it was of a phosphatic nature and that, in consequence, the use of lithotrity was possible. A second operation was performed on Monday, January 6, at midday, and was pronounced satisfactory. On January 7 and 8 the patient appeared to suffer less pain, but he was delirious at intervals.

"Where is Louis?" he asked the Empress, who had never left his bedside.

"He is at Woolwich. Do you wish me to send for him?"

"No. His work must not be interrupted."

Another time, finding himself alone with Dr. Conneau, he said to him:

"We did not behave like cowards at Sedan, did we, Conneau?"

He was not believed to be in imminent danger until the morning of the 9th, about ten o'clock, when his pulse was suddenly found to be weaker, and it was evident that the end was rapidly approaching. When the Prince Imperial, summoned in hot haste, arrived about half-past eleven all was over. He fell on his knees before the death-bed and fervently repeated aloud the Lord's Prayer.

Circumstances having detained me at Woolwich, I did not arrive at Camden Place until half an hour after the Prince. In a letter which I wrote to my family the following night I thus described what I had seen and felt:

"First of all I went to greet tenderly the poor boy, then I sought the Empress, who was wandering about the house, and falling on my knees I kissed her hand. She said to me: 'Come and see him!' and led me into the Emperor's room.

"'Is not his face beautiful?' she said to me. And it was true. She began to sob and had to withdraw. I stayed on some time by the side of our poor master. I then went away, only to return some moments later with the Prince, who wished to see his father a second time. We take it in turns to watch over the corpse, and as my watch is from half-past two to five in the morning, I have preferred not to go to bed.

". . . I must leave off here to go into the mortuary chamber, for the clock is striking the hour for my vigil. . . This long gloomy night reminds me of those I have spent at the Tuileries, in the Empress's study, in August and September, 1870. Then I was keeping watch at the death-bed of the Empire, to-night it is at the death-bed of the Emperor."

The Emperor had died on a little iron bed, placed in a corner of the room. He was now laid on a larger bed which had been used for the fatal operations and which was placed against the wall, facing the window. Day and night, from the hour when Napoleon III breathed his last until his coffin passed the threshold of Camden Place, we relieved one another, hour by hour, to watch over his remains. Two Sisters of Saint Joseph were continuously in

prayer. The chest of drawers had been converted into an altar, and shining upon it was the reliquary known as "the talisman of Charlemagne." The violets,[1] which very soon began to arrive from everywhere, accumulated in great heaps around his bed.

Since then I can never inhale the sweet and penetrating perfume of violets without instinctively recalling that odor of death so uncannily associated with the smell of these flowers during the hours of the long winter nights which I spent by the funeral couch of Napoleon III.

In the few moments of leisure left me I made hasty notes on all that passed during these sad days. Here are some passages which may be of interest:

"*January* 11.—To-day, Saturday, the body of the Emperor has been embalmed. It was then drest in the uniform of a Divisional General. Messieurs Davillier, Clary, Conneau and Pietri had the honor of performing this last toilet. The Emperor is wearing, besides the *grand cordon* of the Légion d'Honneur, the star of grand-officer of the same order, the Military Medal and the *Médaille d'Italie*.

"His body has been placed in a leaden coffin, lined with white, which rests on two supports draped with black cloth. All round the coffin is a garland of violets. A large wreath of the same flowers has been placed at the foot of the coffin.

"On his breast rests the sword with a little cross, which is connected with traditions of the family. A photograph of the Empress and one of the Prince Imperial have been placed in the coffin, close to His Majesty's heart.

"*January* 14.—The Bonaparte princes go to fetch the

[1] The violet was the Imperial flower (Translator's Note).

Prince Imperial from Oak Lodge, where he has spent the night,[1] and to bring him back to Camden Place. It is now eleven o'clock. The one-time dignitaries of the Empire crowd the gallery, which is entirely hung with black. The whole Household is there. I have never seen so many of them. . . .

"11.30.—The arrival of the Prince of Wales and of the Duke of Edinburgh is announced. The Prince Imperial goes to receive them and they embrace. They seem much moved. The Duc de Bassano, Grand Chamberlain, and the Duc de Cambacérès, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, conduct the English princes to the coffin of Napoleon III.

"The hall, transformed into a lying-in-state chamber, is lighted by silver candelabra.

"A large white cross occupies the wall at the end. The Imperial crown, also white, stands out on the black hangings. An immense French tricolor flag forms the canopy. In the center of the hall, on a sloping support, is placed the Emperor's coffin, round which hang, in long folds, black velvet draperies bearing the arms of the Empire. A plaited rope in black silk and silver separates the gallery from this funeral sanctuary.

"Two ecclesiastics and six officers of the household, in deep mourning, stand motionless beside their master.

"The Emperor is seen lying at full length in his white coffin; he is drest in his general's uniform, with his sword by his side, his *képi* at his feet, the ribbon of the Légion d'Honneur across his body. On his breast, with a mother-of-pearl crucifix, rests the Star of the Legion, the Military Medal, the Medal for the Campaign of Italy, and the Medal for Military Valor, a Swedish order

[1] A neighboring house then occupied by the Comte and Comtesse Clary.

only awarded to those Sovereigns who have been victorious in battle.

"The Emperor's moustache and imperial are as he used to wear them; his features have not altered. In their pallor and rigidity they retain an imposing serenity. As one looks upon him the word 'majesty,' by which etiquet greets emperors and kings, comes naturally to one's lips.

"*Noon.*—The English princes salute Napoleon's coffin, they go to take leave of the Empress, and then withdraw.

"The Prince Imperial, followed by his relatives and the household, approaches in his turn. Stifling his emotion, he kneels, sprinkles holy water on the body, and goes out, after having embraced his mother.

"The procession now begins. First come the most illustrious servants of the Empire, then all the French people who have journeyed hither to salute Napoleon III for the last time, and lastly the members of the immense crowd that has gathered at the approaches to the park. They enter by the large gate, follow the avenue, enter the gallery by a side door, and pass without stopping before the coffin, then leave the house and the park by another way.

"Standing behind the Imperial coffin, I watch these thousands of figures which follow one another, appearing to glide rather than to walk, so slow, regular and continuous is the movement which carries them forward. The gleam of the tapers falls full on their pale faces as they crowd one against another to stare with wide open eyes, or lean forward eagerly in order to see better and to treasure for ever, imprinted on their memory, the picture on which their eyes rest during these thirty seconds.

"From time to time a hand is stretched out from the crowd and lays a wreath or a bouquet at the Emperor's feet. Flowers—above all violets—accumulate minute by minute. One can make out the inscriptions on the wreaths: 'To the Emperor Napoleon.' 'Farewell.' 'Remembrance from your Fatherland.'

"The stillness is profound. No other sound is heard but the dull shuffling movement of the crowd. Now and again, however, come exclamations of tenderness and sorrow in French and English. A man's voice—the voice of a soldier—cries out in passing: 'Farewell, my Emperor!' An old woman begs to be allowed 'to see him for an instant longer.' One can hear stifled sobs here and there.

"The hours roll by, darkness falls, one can hardly distinguish the tricolor flag that floats over the house. The dimly lighted countryside is full of confused sounds and the dull shuffling of feet. The march past continues; about sixty thousand people have passed through. It is six o'clock and the crowd begins to grow less.

"9 *p. m.*—Several hundred French people, who have just disembarked, are allowed to enter. Then the gates and doors are shut.

"10 *p. m.*—There are now around the dead Emperor only Prince Louis-Lucien, Prince Napoleon-Charles, and five or six faithful servants, Comte Davillier, Comte Clary, Baron Corvisart, Dr. Conneau, and Messieurs Pietri and Filon. They have all come to kiss for the last time the cold hand of Napoleon III, on which are two rings—his own wedding ring and the ring which was on the finger of Napoleon I when he died at St. Helena.

"M. Rouher dictates the official report, which describes down to the smallest detail the costume of the dead

Emperor and the particulars of his lying-in-state. The assistants place bouquets of *immortelles* in the coffin. They divide among themselves some flowers which have touched the body of Napoleon III.

"The black draperies are removed from the coffin, which is an elm coffin lined with lead. The lid is put on; the assistants have now looked upon the face of the Emperor for the last time. It is a quarter to ten. The coffin lid is hermetically sealed by running lead into the grooves. A plate is affixt bearing the following inscription:

NAPOLÉON III
EMPEREUR DES FRANÇAIS
né à Paris le 20 Avril 1808
Mort à Camden Place
Chislehurst
le 9 Janvier 1873.
R. I. P.

"The leaden coffin is then placed in a second coffin of oak lined with velvet, ornamented with brass nails and chased metal handles. The lid, also covered with velvet, is solidly screwed down. It bears a plate similar to the other, but with the addition of the imperial crown and the cross.

"The heaps of flowers left during the day almost cover the black draped supports on which the coffin is resting.

"*A quarter past midnight.*—Everybody has left the mortuary except the two Sisters of St. Joseph, who have kept watch over the Emperor for six nights, an ex-chaplain of the Tuileries, and the officer of the household on duty (one of those whom we have so often mentioned).

"The Empress descends the stairs accompanied by the Duchesse de Mouchy, Comtesse Clary, the Vicomtesse Aguado, and Mesdames de Saulcy and Lebreton-Bourbaki.

"Her Majesty kneels down on a black-draped rest. She passes the long night in prayer.

"It is twenty years since she was married at Notre Dame to him whose mortal remains now lie beside her.

"It is exactly fourteen years to the day since she was sitting by his side in the carriage which drove them to the Opera on the night of Orsini's attempt at assassination.

"*January* 15.—Ever since eight o'clock the crowd has been gathering at the park gates, round the Catholic Church, and on the roads to be followed by the funeral.

"At half past ten o'clock the house and park are filled with French visitors.

"The body is taken up after the usual prayers.

"The Prince Imperial leaves the house, followed by the Princes and by his officers. His mourning cloak, half open, reveals the *grand cordon* of the Légion d'Honneur.

"The coffin is placed in a hearse bearing the Imperial arms, and drawn by eight horses draped in black velvet.

"The procession moves off in the following order:

"A deputation of Parisian workmen, carrying a tricolor flag. (Some astonishment is exprest that the staff which supports our national ensign is only a wretched stick, but we are told that the original banner carried by the workmen has been confiscated at the French frontier, and that the man who carried it is now in one of the prisons of the Republic). Behind the workmen walk the clergy, after the flag comes the Cross. It is followed by the French ecclesiastics, among whom one notices several Canons of St. Denis and the Emperor's almoners.

"Sixteen bearers follow carrying black rods and with hats covered with crape.

"Next comes the hearse which bears the Emperor's body, each horse being led by a man in deep mourning. At the sides of the hearse, to the right and left, come, first the seven persons who compose the Emperor's household and that of the Prince at Chislehurst; then the principal officers of the Crown, to wit, the Duc de Bassano, the Duc de Cambacérès, General Fleury, the Prince de la Moskowa and General Frossard. Then the Prince Imperial, followed by Prince Napoleon and the other Princes of the Imperial Family.

"Next in the procession come the representatives of the English Royal Family (Lord Sydney, Lord Cowley, Lord Suffield, etc.), the generals sent by the King of Italy to represent the Court of the Quirinal and the Italian people, and the Ministers of foreign Powers in London.

"Then follows an illustrious group of men, including two marshals and an admiral of France, twenty-seven ex-Ministers, seventeen generals, six vice-admirals and rear-admirals, fourteen members of the National Assembly, a hundred Senators and Deputies of the Empire, the whole of the Imperial households, many notable members of the Imperial Civil Service, and lastly four thousand French persons of all ranks brought together by a common sorrow.

"This imposing procession passes through the gates and advances towards the village of Chislehurst. It is impossible to estimate the numbers of the crowd which lined the route. Every head is bared. A large number of English people are wearing in their buttonholes either *immortelles* in token of mourning or violets, the Imperial flower.

"They look with respectful eyes upon this sad yet

glorious spectacle, which belies the character for carelessness and ingratitude attributed to our country on such slender grounds. All eyes rest more particularly upon the young Prince who walks with a firm step behind his father's coffin. Words of sympathy for him, murmured in low tones, are on everyone's lips: 'Poor dear!' 'Poor Prince!' 'Poor darling!' People gaze for long at his pale and manly features, the expression of which has aged ten years in eight days.

"The procession takes half an hour to traverse the distance from Camden Place to the Church of Saint Mary. At last it reaches the gates of the cemetery and eight men raise the Imperial coffin on their shoulders. A pall of violet velvet, embroidered with the Napoleonic bees and traversed by a large cross, is thrown over the coffin and over those who carry it with solemn steps.

"The Catholic Bishop of Southwark, assisted by his clergy and by the Abbé Goddard, rector of Saint Mary's, comes forward to meet the body at the church door. It is put down at the entrance to the chancel and the service commences.

"Barely two hundred people can find room in the church. The Princes and Princesses are in the choir, on the right-hand side of the nave are the representatives of the Royal Families, on the left are about eighty French and English ladies; amongst them we note Lady Cowley, Lady Sydney, the *Maréchales* Saint-Arnaud, Malakoff, Regnault de St. Jean-d'Angély and Canrobert, Mme. Fleury, Princess de la Moskowa, Mmes. de la Poëze, Carette, de Sancy-Parabère, de Saulcy, and Aguado—the last five are ladies-in-waiting to the Empress.

"The Chislehurst household and the great officials are standing about the catafalque.

"The principal personages of the Empire occupy the body of the church.

"Stifled sobs are followed by the hush of prayer. At the moment of the Elevation the silence is so profound in this kneeling crowd that each one, isolated in his own grief, might easily believe himself to be alone in the church.

"The ceremony over, absolution is pronounced by the bishop. The coffin is placed in a tiny side chapel, which can only be reached by a narrow arch. The Duc de Bassano and others of the intimate retinue of the Emperor advance and place upon the coffin the wreaths which had been heaped up at the foot of the catafalque. The iron gate is then closed. Those present make way for the Prince Imperial, who is the first to sprinkle Holy Water on the coffin, and then withdraws.

"1.30 *p. m.*—On returning from the church the Prince interviews the faithful ones who have come to attend his father's funeral. When he arrives at the group of French workmen an incident occurs. The man who carries the banner, in reply to the Prince's words, cries, 'Long live the Emperor! Long live Napoleon IV!'

"'The Emperor is dead,' said the Prince to him, 'but France lives. You should cry: 'Long live France!'

"The crowd does not hear these words and repeats: 'Long live the Emperor!'

"Those who were already leaving come running back. This crowd, a moment ago so calm and collected, now becomes so tumultuous that we experience some difficulty in getting the Prince back to the house to escape this unexpected manifestation."

I take from my diary one last recollection, dated the following day, January 16:

"2 *p. m.*—Almost all the French people who were present at the Emperor's funeral yesterday have come back to see the Empress.

"The Empress comes down the stairs leaning on her son's arm. She first sees the ladies standing in line in the dining-room as they did yesterday. Gradually her tears choke her utterance and her emotion paralyzes her, but she insists upon going through with this last sad long review of her friends. It is agony indeed, yet it brings her some comfort.

"She enters the gallery, holds out her hand in succession to those she finds there. They all throw themselves on their knees and kiss the Empress's hand, weeping. Men who have probably not shed a tear for fifty years are sobbing audibly. I believe that rarely, if ever, has a crowd displayed collectively such an intensity of grief, and those who have witnessed it are not likely to see such a spectacle again.

"At the feet of this widow, enveloped in mourning, was the whole of French society representing the twenty years of the Second Empire, swearing allegiance, not in obedience but in sorrow. And amid these representatives of various aristocracies was the workman who on the previous day had carried the tricolor flag. If anything could have intensified our emotion it was to have seen this man, on his knees like the others, kissing the hand of the Empress, weeping and murmuring incoherent words of affection and regret for Napoleon III."

CHAPTER XIII

THE EMPRESS EFFACES HERSELF

THE death of the Emperor imposed anew on the Empress heavy responsibilities from which she believed she had escaped. The first question which presented itself was the education of the Prince. People in the party wondered whether he would return to his student's life at Woolwich or whether he would hold himself at the disposition of the Imperialists, in view of circumstances which might arise at any moment. But this question was not even raised. The Prince himself had made up his mind to finish his studies creditably, and would not have allowed himself to be drawn away from them. Three weeks after the funeral of Napoleon III he went back to his little house at Woolwich with his tutor and with Louis Conneau, whom the English Government had also authorized to follow the course at the Military Academy.

It was necessary first of all to settle the Emperor's inheritance in accordance with his will, written at the Tuileries and dated April 24, 1865, of which the text is as follows:

"I commend my son and my wife to the estates of the Realm, to the People and to the Army. The Empress Eugénie possesses all the qualities necessary for the conduct of the Regency, and my son shows inclinations and judgment which will render him worthy of his high destiny.

"He must never forget the motto of the Head of our family, '*Tout pour le peuple français*' (All for the people

of France); he must make himself thoroughly acquainted with the writings of the prisoner of St. Helena; he must study the acts and the correspondence of the Emperor, in order that he may remember, when the time comes, that the cause of the peoples is the cause of France.

"Sovereignty is a heavy burden, because one cannot always do the good one desires, and one's contemporaries rarely do one justice; a Sovereign in order to accomplish his mission, must have in himself faith and a clear consciousness of his duty. He must remember that those whom he has loved look down upon him from above and guard him.

"It is the spirit of my great-uncle that has always inspired and sustained me. This spirit will do the same for my son, for he will always be worthy of his name.

"I leave to the Empress Eugénie all my private estate. I desire that when my son attains his majority she will live at the Elysée and at Biarritz.

"I hope that my memory will be dear to her, and that after I am dead she will forget whatever sorrow I may have caused her.

"As for my son, I wish him to keep as a talisman the seal which I carry attached to my watch, and which came to me from my mother; to preserve with care all those objects which have come to me from the Emperor, my uncle, and I want him to rest assured that my heart and soul will ever remain with him.

"I do not mention my faithful servants. I am convinced that the Empress and my son will never forsake them.

"I die in the Catholic religion, Apostolic and Roman, to which my son will always do pious reverence.

"(*Signed*) NAPOLEON."

This will was, as we can see, a political one. It had been written to allow the Emperor to place his son once again under the protecting influence of the Napoleonic tradition, and to accredit the Empress as Regent, by raising her as high as possible in the affection and esteem of the French people. Above all, it had given Napoleon III the chance of offering to the Empress an apology for offenses that had deeply wounded her.

The will contained hardly anything of that which usually fills ordinary wills, barely a line, but this line was perfectly clear and bequeathed to the Empress the whole of the Emperor's personal fortune. The change in the situation of those interested, who were now in the condition of private persons, and the difference between the laws of inheritance obtaining in France and those of England, so far from rendering the provisions of the will impracticable, both combined to make them easier to carry out.

Apart from the difficulty of realizing certain property, nothing could have been easier than to settle the matter of the inheritance if political passions and personal hatreds had not been mingled with it.

It was Prince Napoleon who introduced this trouble into the house where the Emperor had just died. He demanded a second will. He "was not able to believe that the Emperor had not made a new will." M. Pietri conducted the Prince to the Emperor's study. There he found the drawers fastened with linen bands on which Pietri had placed his seal. The Prince muttered that these seals were not in order, to which the Emperor's secretary replied briefly that they were not official seals, but simply a precaution taken by order of the Emperor when he took to his bed before his first operation, in order to

prevent anyone tampering with his papers.[1] Upon that the Prince opened one of the drawers in which he found only papers "of no importance," that is to say, of no importance to him. They were lists of the names and addresses of several thousands of French persons who had written to the Emperor with protestations of their loyalty to offer their services.

The Empress exprest a wish to see Prince Napoleon. She related the details of this interview, later on, to a friend, whose story I shall now give. This friend was Raoul Duval senior, the admirable magistrate who, under the Empire, had resigned his post as Public Prosecutor in order to devote himself to the rehabilitation of a man he had caused to be condemned in error. Of Duval, the Prince was able to write in 1878: "As a judge he had but one aim, to do justice. As a politician he saw but one goal —the success of the cause which he served so well." No one can challenge or dispute the testimony of such a man.

[2]"In 187 . . . I was at Camden Place on one of those visits which I usually make there at least twice a year, and I had a private conversation with H. M. the Empress in the drawing-room where she usually receives visitors. In the course of the conversation, using the frankness of speech which she and her son always authorized and encouraged me to use, I drew Her Majesty's attention to the

[1] This precaution was the more necessary as we had just discovered a leakage. A valet named K—— used to steal documents and sell them to Thiers' Government. A letter which had been written to me by M. Vührer was found on the table of the Juge d'Instruction at the Palais de Justice in Paris.

[2] The relatives of Raoul Duval have kindly communicated to me the above unpublished note. I submitted it to the Empress, who declared it to be exact on all points. It was not dated, but certain allusions it contained showed that the conversation reported here had taken place in one of the first months of 1873, at the time when the Orleanists had not yet succeeded in bringing about an amalgamation with the Bourbon Royalists.

grievous effect of the differences that then existed in the bosom of the Imperial family.

"'In these differences lies,' I said to her, 'one obvious reason for the weakening of our party, and some of your most faithful friends view them with infinite regret. Similar differences have existed in the House of Bourbon between M. le Comte de Chambord and the Princes of Orleans, and an attempt has been made to put an end to them by a more or less complete reconciliation. Would it not be possible for the Imperial family to follow this useful example with better success?'

"'I have tried to do so in vain,' replied the Empress, without, however, indicating when and where. 'I have held out my hand to the Prince, saying, as I did so, "Come now, you know I am not a vindictive woman; let us forget our dissensions, put your hand in mine and let there be no question of the past between us!" The Prince only replied, "Madame, I will shortly make you acquainted with my resolutions." He withdrew, and, some days later, he sent Colonel Stoffel to me, who said that the Prince consented to a reconciliation but on two conditions on which he would not compromise: the first was that he should be recognized as the head of the Imperialist Party, and that he should have the *absolute* direction of that party. I would have accepted this condition, dangerous though it might prove to the interests of my son. But the second!'

"Here the voice of the Empress faltered and her eyes filled with tears.

"'The second! He dared—would you believe it?—he dared demand that the person of the Prince Imperial should be confided to his sole care and surveillance! . . . Do you realize the insult and all the threatening import of such a message?'

Photo: Russell

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE TOWARD THE CLOSE OF HER LIFE

"And here the poor woman, shaking with sobs, held out her hands to me with a forlorn gesture which affected me so profoundly that, forgetting respectful etiquet, I took both her hands and held them for some instants in my own.

"'I cried out,' she went on in a broken voice, 'does the Prince, then, wish me to admit myself incapable and unworthy to bring up my son! What have I done to merit such an outrage?' . . ."[1]

Prince Napoleon returned to Paris without having accepted the olive branch offered him by the Empress. He had replied to an amicable proposal by a mortal insult. And yet, strange to say, she did not despair of bringing him to a better frame of mind, and she made fresh and perfectly disinterested efforts to come to some agreement.

On his return to France Prince Napoleon said, or caused to be spread abroad by his partizans, that the Emperor had made a second will which the Empress, with the complicity of M. Rouher and M. Franceschini Pietri, had destroyed, in order to appropriate her son's fortune. I heard this rumor the moment it was started, but I believed it would be speedily disposed of by the good sense of public opinion. In that I was mistaken. The women who could never forgive the Empress Eugénie for having been the most beautiful woman of her day, the statesmen who had not succeeded in passing from the second or third rank to the first, those who had solicited in vain for place or decorations and who imputed—Heaven knows why—their disappointment to the Empress, the extreme Liberals who saw in her a religious bigot, influenced by priests, finally the nincompoops who are ever looking for melodrama in history, and for whom no picture

[1] Here ends the narrative of M. Raoul Duval (Translator's Note).

of human life is interesting unless it is unreal, had all agreed to believe in the existence of the mysterious will supprest by the Empress and her two accomplices.

Need I say that I did not believe a word of it? I had little liking for Rouher, but I have never heard him accused of dishonesty. The uprightness, the exceptional steadfastness of Pietri's character I knew well. I knew that before being given to the Empress his devotion had belonged without reserve to the Emperor and the Prince Imperial; that, if she had wished to have diverted a particle of the inheritance destined by the Emperor for the Prince Imperial she would not have found a more tenacious and more implacable adversary than Pietri. But apart from this, how was it possible to suspect her for an instant, to imagine that this passionately devoted mother, who had no other care but her son's future, no other interest in life but his welfare and honor could have wished to defraud him? I did not even think it worth while to make the least inquiry, being perfectly certain that all was well. It is only in these latter years, when I decided to eventually publish my testimony concerning the events which I had witnessed, that I put certain questions to Pietri, and this is what he replied:

"The Emperor never intended to make a second will. Such a task is not to everybody's taste. He did not believe himself to be at the point of death. And then, what would have been the object? By the first will he wished to affirm his confidence in the Empress. Far from diminishing, this confidence had increased. The personal fortune of the Emperor was not very considerable.[1] You

[1] The English solicitors, who effected the settlement of the estate, declared that the fortune of Napoleon III amounted to less than £120,000, and in consequence of various claims upon it the amount actually available for the legatee would, in reality, be only about half of this declared total.

know that he paid little attention to money matters and never reckoned what he spent.[1] The Empress, on the contrary, is rich in her own right, and has entrusted the management of her property to a skilful and devoted man of business whom you know well.

"The Emperor therefore looked to his wife for providing the Prince Imperial with such an adequate allowance as would render him independent of his parents-in-law when he married. Indeed, we have worked untiringly for that object from 1873 to 1879. I say 'we' because I helped the Empress in that task with all my might.

"The Prince spent hardly anything on himself. One day Bachon came to sell him a horse—an admirable bargain.

"'How much?' asked the Prince.

"'Ten thousand francs.'

"'That is too dear. For ten thousand francs I could run an election.'"

And Pietri continued: "You see from that the view he took of questions of money. The great danger against which we had to protect him was the visits of intriguers and swindlers who would come to ask him for fabulous sums to start a newspaper, publish a book, buy some useful cooperation, or create a new kind of propaganda. All

[1] I can give an instance to show the indifference with which the Emperor treated such matters. In August, 1870, when he separated from the Prince, he said to Comte Clary, handing him three rolls of bank-notes: "You will find ten thousand francs in each of these packets. It is for the Prince's expenses." Hardly had Clary left than he counted the notes and found only nine in each packet. Very distrest he returned to the Emperor and informed him about it. "Ah," said the Emperor negligently, "well, then, you have twenty-seven thousand francs instead of thirty thousand." How many times since the beginning of his reign had his packets of notes thus been tampered with?

I might add that a certain person used to steal from his bedroom-table pieces of gold which he placed there at night when he emptied his waistcoat pockets. He noticed it in the end, but he hesitated to punish or even dismiss the guilty one.

these people said that he ought to strike while the iron was hot, and make great sacrifices as the occasion would never return again. In the beginning the Prince was inclined to believe them, but after the fiasco of May 16 he was disillusioned. Besides, he was beginning to understand human nature and in consequence he was better able to defend himself against such self-interested attempts. It was then that, at the request of the Empress and Prince Imperial, three lawyers, Pinard, Grandperret and Busson-Billault, drew up in consultation a settlement which was voluntary and had no compulsory validity in law. In order to provide him with an adequate fortune she had resolved to make over to him half the paternal inheritance, in accordance with the French law. This division had just been completed when the Prince left for Zululand.

"But the Empress," added Pietri, "had not waited until then to make the Prince financially comfortable. When he went to Scandinavia she opened an unlimited credit for him, which he drew on largely; for I can assure you that he spent money *en route* like a reigning Prince."

Pietri concluded by saying: "How dare they say that he had not a sou, when by his will, after having appointed his mother residuary legatee, he left legacies to individuals amounting to over a million francs?"

The wish to set forth here all that I know about the settlement of the Imperial inheritance has led me far away from my immediate subject. I will now return to the events which followed the death of the Emperor.

By right the Empress was Regent from January 9, 1873, to March 16, 1874. After that date, and until February, 1875, when the Prince left Woolwich, he was supposed to hold in his own hands the policy of the party. But this was nothing but a fiction and, in reality, Rouher

managed everything. What, then, did Rouher do? He did nothing, and he ought not to be blamed for that, for in the parliamentary arena there was nothing to be done. To distribute by hundreds of thousands, by millions, pamphlets and newspapers, to refute calumnies and re-establish the truth about the last acts of the Imperial régime, such was the work of these two years. In Parliament this old statesman had a following of only twenty-five or thirty. He never mounted the rostrum without feeling sorely troubled, and instead of receiving the admiring deference to which he had once been accustomed on the part of the House, he met with nothing but scornful hostility from the Republican Minority, and disdainful tolerance from the Royalist Majority; it was to the tail of the latter party that he attached himself when the hour to vote arrived.

Meanwhile the Prince worked hard at mathematics and gunnery. As for the Empress, she would have lost herself in the parliamentary imbroglio if she had attempted to follow and to control from a distance these maneuvers which repeated themselves endlessly and not infrequently annuled one another.

Was Rouher wise to associate himself with the movement which overthrew Thiers and replaced him by Marshal MacMahon?

We believed so at first, but we were not slow in repenting of our belief when the Comte de Paris paid his famous visit to Frohsdorf. The white flag of the Comte de Chambord[1] saved us, and the Imperial party, taking up again its true rôle, made rapid progress from March 16, 1874.

[1] A Royalist restoration would probably have been inevitable at this time had the Orleanists and "Legitimists" joined forces. The Comte de Chambord stubbornly refused to give up the white standard with the golden fleur-de-lys of the Kings of France for the tricolor, and this one point wrecked the negotiations (Translator's Note).

This I can assert, because the correspondence which reached me at Woolwich brought striking proofs by every post. But, as I spent only Sundays at Chislehurst, I was little in touch with all that happened there, with the visitors who were received and with the share which the Empress took in the direction of affairs.

My impression is that she voluntarily and daily effaced herself more and more. When the Prince left the Royal Military Academy and began to study all the questions in detail she withdrew completely. She carried discretion so far as to be absent when any important resolutions had to be taken. She put into this attitude no affectation and no sulkiness, and gave her personal opinion quite frankly in conversation and in her letters, but she did not trouble herself to find out whether her advice had been taken into consideration. She did not, indeed, renounce the right of giving advice; for instance, she would say, in connection with the visit of a new adherent: "Do not speak much; let him speak and listen yourself. That is what your father would have done." The tone suggests rather the mother who teaches than the Regent who commands, does it not?

In the summer of 1875 the Empress went to see her son, who was now doing duty as an acting lieutenant of artillery at Aldershot. On leaving him she went on to Arenenberg, where she stayed for a period every year after the death of the Emperor. Napoleon III would never return there during the last years of his life. The Empress explained this repugnance to me one day as a sort of superstition. "To revisit the home of his youth," she said, "would have made him feel like a wounded animal returning to its lair to die."

The Prince, on the contrary, had a lively affection for

the former residence of Queen Hortense, and he eagerly rejoined his mother there as soon as he could leave Aldershot. Arenenberg was then full of young people, of gaiety and movement, and the politicians who flocked there from France did not succeed in destroying the charm of the place. The lake and the mountains supplied all kinds of sport. The Empress, whom I had seen at Biarritz and Fontainebleau taking part in such recreations, now abstained from them, but one felt how happy she was in seeing her son the center and the inspiration of a thousand amusements.

In the autumn of 1876, instead of again returning to Camden Place as in former years, both mother and son turned towards Italy. The Prince, with two friends, spent some days in Venice, and then visited the battlefields of 1859. During this time the Empress, who had arrived at Florence, settled at the Villa Oppenheim, where the Prince soon joined her.

Concerning these first days in Florence the Empress told me the following anecdote.

King Victor Emmanuel having called upon her at the Villa Oppenheim, she immediately returned his visit at the Pitti Palace. She was received in a drawing-room entirely hung with portraits of the Hohenzollerns whose spiked helmets offended her eyes at every turn. On the other hand, the portrait of Napoleon III, who had made the House of Savoy the Royal House of Italy, was absent. As the Empress, even whilst speaking, never ceased looking at the pictures of all these Prussians, the King, in spite of his self-possession, became slightly embarrassed.

"You are astonished," he said, "at what you see."

"No," replied the Empress, "I am astonished at what I do not see."

From Florence the Empress and the Prince went to Rome, where the godson of Pius IX went to pay his respects to his illustrious sponsor at the Vatican. Then mother and son separated. Whilst the Prince visited the port and dockyards of Spezzia, returning to England *viâ* Germany, the Empress went to Naples, whence she passed into Spain after having broken the journey at Malta. She prolonged her stay with her mother, whom she had not met for many years, and it was not without emotion that she revisited this house of Carabanchel, the scene of her first amusements and of her first triumphs as a young girl. The old trees of Carabanchel had, no doubt, used the lapse of time to grow somewhat and thereby justify the Comtesse de Montijo's illusions concerning them.

At this moment there took place in France the political landslide of the *Seize Mai*,[1] and judging by the letters which passed between mother and son, they were both of the same impression when events became fully known to them—namely, that the Orleanists were trying to exploit for their own purposes the reviving popularity of the Imperialist Party. I have previously explained that the Prince made every effort to prevent his friends from falling into the trap, but he only half succeeded.

The failure of May 16, and more particularly the retirement of the marshal, which was brought about without the least trouble, served to show the Empress and her son that their judgment had not been at fault, and I believe they never agreed better than during the last year they spent together. Far from being the opprest, kept-under child, deprived of initiative and of pleasures, which some despicable books represent him to have been,

[1] May 16, 1877, when a Republican majority put an end to the Presidency of Marshal MacMahon and to the rule of the conservative parties (Translator's Note).

the Prince was a man whose physical strength and intellectual freedom were fully developed. Conscious of being absolute master of his own actions, he was in no hurry to marry, as this would have singularly hampered him as a Pretender. Here is what he wrote me in August, 1878, in connection with certain matrimonial projects arising out of his journey to the Courts of the North: "You speak to me of certain projects of marriage which excited friends have put forward. To marry was not the object of my journey, otherwise you would have been one of the first to know. It is possible that I may not wait till years have made me as bald as Corvisart, or 'pot-bellied' like Rouher, before entering upon marriage, but I have at present no definite intention of the kind. Doubtless I may not hope for the happiness of marrying according to my affections, but I know enough of life never to consent to marry against my inclinations, and in this I am not swayed by selfish considerations, but acting as an honest man."

The Empress had not originated this project of marriage, but she appreciated its advantages for the Prince, and she would have made the greatest sacrifices to ensure its accomplishment. She was not, however, seriously disappointed when the affair came to nothing.

They were still at Arenenberg when Colonel Stoffel put another idea into the Prince's head. This idea was for him to enter the Austrian army at the time when this army, by virtue of the mandate of the Powers, was preparing to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Empress objected.

"If there is no war," she said, "you will spend your time in an Austrian garrison playing billiards and making love to an Italian singer. If there is war you will fight

against the poor Turks, who are allies of France, or perhaps (for politics are liable to strange and sudden upheavals in the Balkans) against Russia, whose Sovereign welcomed you like a father four years ago at Woolwich."

The Prince was not, however, convinced, and he persuaded the Empress to write to Francis Joseph in the sense he desired. In telling me about this several years later, she concluded by saying: "The Emperor refused, and I was exceedingly glad."

They returned together to Camden Place. She always came back there with pleasure, for this house had become dear to her. In 1883 I heard her say to my wife: "I do not know why they all complained about Camden Place; to me it was like Heaven." Those four years, 1875–79, were happy years; I might almost say the happiest years of her life. She had her son with her, and he was all that she had wished.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PILGRIMAGE TO ITELEZI

IN my book on the Prince Imperial, I have related how his wish to take part in the Zulu War gradually developed, until at last it became an obsession with him, and how his first request to serve in the English army was refused by the Duke of Cambridge. Nothing daunted by this failure the Prince redoubled his efforts, and at length obtained the longed-for permission. The same evening his mother, who had noticed that he seemed unusually pleased and excited, realized that something unexpected must have transpired, and she prevailed on her son to take her into his confidence. The next morning the Empress discust the project very gravely with the Prince, and for some hours she endeavored unsuccessfully to dissuade him from his intention; but she found the Prince immovable, and indeed she was faced by an accomplished fact, as he had already received the necessary authorization from the Commander-in-Chief.

I have in the work referred to described this event exactly as the Empress herself told it to me at Coombe Cottage in the spring of 1881, when I saw her for the first time after the death of the Prince Imperial, and I have also included some other information kindly given me by M. Franceschini Pietri. It is impossible for me to repeat here in detail what I have already written elsewhere, but nevertheless nearly all the particulars belong equally to the story of the mother as to that of her son, notably that supreme discussion which decided both their lives. I am, therefore, happy to be in a position to

publish the evidence of another independent witness, M. Raoul Duval, senior, whose integrity and intelligence are already known to the reader.[1]

M. Duval gives the Empress's account of the motives which had determined the Prince to leave for South Africa. We must, however, note carefully that in this interview the Empress was, in a sense, pleading the Prince's cause, and trying to put forward his point of view instead of her own, so that she minimized the unhappiness which his departure had caused her. The meeting between the old magistrate and his Sovereign took place on May 12, 1879—that is, nearly three weeks before the death of the Prince.

"When I entreated the Prince to abandon his project, of which the dangers alarmed me," said the Empress to M. Duval, "he replied: 'Listen, mother, I will fully explain my position, and then you can judge for yourself. Owing to the accident of my birth I am not my own master. God has willed it so, and I cannot, even if I would, escape from the destiny which He has appointed for me. Whether I like it or not, I happen to be the nominal, and eventually the effective head of a great party which believes itself to be—and which we believe to be—truly representative of France. Now what have I done hitherto to justify the hopes that people place in me? I have been an exile from my childhood, and I have grown up under the trees of Camden Place. I have worked with the teachers you have given me to acquire for myself a sound education, and to grow up into a man. But of all I have done, of all I have learnt, of all the things of worth that may be in me, nothing, so to speak, has gone outside the walls of my study. Apart from a

[1] Cf. p. 275 (Translator's Note).

small number of my personal friends, nobody knows me, and I can say that in France, although my name may be an emblem, my personality and my moral value, such as they are, are unknown. They still see me as I was when I left the country. In the eyes of my party I have never grown up, and at the age of twenty-three I am still a child to them, and the majority of them treat me as one. This is so true, that whenever on any important occasion I have attempted to direct the Imperialist party, and to impress upon them a uniform policy in conformity with my opinion and my personal wishes, I have not been listened to, and, as often as not, the party has acted in direct opposition to my advice. . . . It is imperative, therefore, that I should take some step to assert myself, and to obtain the influence which is indispensable to my future. There is one thing a man can always do—that is, to show that he does not value his own life too highly, and is prepared to risk it without counting the cost.

"'I am continually having it thrown at my head that the Orleans Princes have seen fighting, and that I have not seen any. My enemies have even gone so far as to call me a coward, simply because I have never had the opportunity of proving the contrary. During the war between Russia and Turkey, Russian and English interests were in direct opposition, and the two Powers were watching one another with their hands, figuratively speaking, on the hilts of their swords. To take sides with either would have been to show myself ungrateful to one or to the other. England gave shelter in the past to my father; she has sheltered us also in our exile, and has shown us all manner of kindnesses. On the other hand, when the Emperor of Russia visited London he evinced, as is well known, the greatest interest in my welfare, and

displayed the most affectionate feelings towards me. He was, so he told me, my sincere well-wisher, and I should always find a warm friend in him. It was therefore impossible for me to take any part against either country. In the Afghan war the situation was identically the same. At the present time, on the other hand, the war is one against savages, no European interests are involved, and no one can take offense at my participation in hostilities. In Africa I shall be able to show that I am no coward, and when I have proved that I am willing to risk my life for a country which is not my own, but to which I owe a debt of gratitude, I shall *a fortiori* have proved that I am equally ready to risk it in the service of my own country when she has need of me.

"'You must, therefore, see that the moment has arrived when I must do something, and that my decision is a reasonable one.'"[1]

"Notwithstanding all the fears of which my heart was full, and the agony which I seemed to foresee," continued the Empress, "I could not fail to realize the justice of many of my son's remarks, and this will explain to you why, although I still argued with him, I resigned myself at last to the inevitable."

The Empress, in her turn, questioned her visitor as to the feelings of the Imperialist party, and the judgment which it had passed on the Prince's departure for Africa. Raoul Duval answered frankly that the news of the Prince's decision had caused general astonishment. It was felt that the Prince had no right even in the service

[1] The Empress, to whom I submitted this account by M. Raoul Duval, told me that it was absolutely correct in essentials. "Only," she added, "the Prince exprest himself in somewhat different terms. He said to me: 'Do you want me to remain always the "little Prince" to everyone? Do you want me to fade away and die of sheer ennui like the Duc de Reichstadt?'"

of a country towards which he had obligations to risk so precious an existence. Did he not, after his great-uncle and his father, embody in his person the Empire—that is, the principle of a monarchy which combined authority with democracy? Was he not its last and only incarnation? If anything untoward were to happen to him, the Imperialist party would dissolve, and nothing would remain of the hopes which had been centered on him.

The Empress remarked that, after all, Prince Napoleon was still alive; but Raoul Duval told her that Prince Napoleon, having renounced the Empire in favor of the Republic, no longer existed for the Imperialists. The Empress then mentioned the Prince's two sons, who were, she said, "very gifted."

"The eldest, Prince Victor, is a charming young man whom my son likes very much."

"I know he is charming," answered M. Duval; "but to reach the son you have first to pass the father."

"Evidently," concluded the Empress, "one cannot pass over Prince Napoleon."

I have purposely quoted this remark, because it certainly expresses the Empress's real opinion. She was far from suspecting that at that moment her son's will, which disinherited Prince Napoleon, was lying in a sealed box at the bottom of a cupboard in the very room (unless I am mistaken, it was the Prince's smoking-room) where she was speaking.

Those who have known the Empress will hardly recognize her in the speech previously quoted, in which she explains her son's motives. The fact is that she held Raoul Duval's view even more strongly than Raoul Duval himself. She did not tell him of her frantic efforts to keep the Prince in Europe. But she could not hide from him the

evidences of the torturing anxiety caused by the depressing rumors which had been spread about since the Prince's departure. Two forged telegrams had been circulated, one of which was published in the *Figaro*. According to this, a steamer coming from the Cape had called at Madeira on May 10, and brought news of the Prince Imperial's serious illness. All this was nothing but malicious invention, as it was discovered later, from official information, that no steamer from the Cape had called at Madeira for some time. If the Prince had been seriously ill the Empress would have been the first person to hear of it from the faithful Uhlmann, the devoted servant who had accompanied her son to Africa.

The Empress wished to appear easy in her mind, but she was not so in reality. She did not tell Raoul Duval that her anxiety increased from day to day, and was consuming her. In fact, she was so obsessed by it that she determined to go to Africa herself. Queen Victoria, who was informed of this, at once endeavored to persuade the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief, to urge the Prince to return to Europe, and Lord Wolseley, who was on the point of leaving England to replace Lord Chelmsford at the head of the troops in Zululand, was entrusted, it was said, with the orders for the Prince's return.

But the fatal event of June 1 forestalled him. As no cable existed at that time between London and the Cape, the news of the death of the Prince Imperial took three weeks to transmit to Madeira, where it was known on June 20. The same day it reached the British Government, but directly Queen Victoria was apprized of the dreadful tidings, her first thought was to spare her friend the horror of first reading of her son's fate in the

morning papers. The Queen therefore sent the Lord High Chamberlain, Lord Sydney, to Camden Place to break the news to the Empress.

The age and rank of the Duc de Bassano entitled him to the cruel distinction of conveying this dreadful message to his Sovereign, and the poor man remembered the morning of June 21 to his dying day. The moment that he entered the Empress's room she read tragedy in the agitated face of the old Duke.

"Is my son ill?" cried the Empress.

There was no reply.

"Is he wounded? . . . I will leave for Africa at once."

Still there was silence. Thereupon the Empress rose from where she was sitting and walked up to the unhappy Duke. She looked straight into his eyes, but he could not meet her gaze. Then she understood, and, uttering one heartbroken cry, she fell fainting into the arms of her old Chamberlain. The Empress remained in this pitiable condition, shattered and broken, one fainting fit succeeding the other, all that fatal day. Those around her feared for her life, and it was only at the end of several days that she regained strength to face her overwhelming sorrow and to fulfil the duties which circumstances demanded of her. Her first thought was to let both the French and the English know that she wished no one to suffer in his person or in his position on account of the event of June 1. Another wish, equally near to her heart, was to establish that her son had no share of responsibility for the loss of the two soldiers who fell with him at Ityotyozi, or, to put it plainly, that he was not in command that day.

The Prince, however, was not in command of the

expedition; Captain Carey was in charge of the party and had selected the spot where they halted. That Captain Carey was actually in command appears from the following considerations:

1. He was of English nationality.
2. He was the Prince's senior in military rank.
3. He had been entrusted with this particular mission by his chief, Colonel Harrison.
4. He admitted it himself in a letter written to his wife on the evening of June 1, the contents of which were afterwards communicated to the Empress.
5. The Prince himself confirmed it by these four words, the last entry in his pocket-book: "Escort under Captain Carey."

These facts are indisputable; they have never been contradicted, and cannot be contradicted by any fresh evidence.

However, the desire to throw further light on this point, already abundantly clear, was one of the reasons which determined the Empress to undertake, in the following year, a long and difficult journey. In my book, "*Le Prince Impérial, Souvenirs et Documents*," [1] I have already published a letter in which the Empress told M. Franceschini Pietri of her resolve and gave him her reasons. But this letter is so beautiful, even in its incoherence, it reveals in such an arresting manner the rare personality of its writer, that I cannot resist the temptation to reproduce it here. The Empress writes:

". . . I feel myself drawn towards this pilgrimage as strongly as the disciples of Christ must have felt drawn

[1] Paris, Hachette et Cie., 1912 (Translator's Note).

towards the Holy Places. The thought of seeing, of retracing the stages of my beloved son's last journey, of seeing with my own eyes the scene upon which his dying gaze has rested, of passing the anniversary of the night of the 1st of June watching and praying alone with his memory, is for me a spiritual necessity and an aim in life. Since the end of the war has allowed me to regard this possibility more hopefully, it has become my dominant thought. . . . This thought sustains me and gives me fresh courage; without it I should never have sufficient strength to endure my life, and I should allow myself to be submerged in my sorrow. . . . I am under no delusions as to the painful experiences which await me in Africa, or the long and trying sea voyage and the strain of a hurried journey, but all this vanishes when I think of Itelezi. . . ."

Queen Victoria displayed the greatest solicitude for the Empress, and she insisted that a general officer should act as her escort in order to watch over her safety and render her journey as easy as possible in an uncivilized country, possessing but few resources in case of need, and one in which peace was barely reestablished. This general officer was Sir Evelyn Wood, afterwards raised to the rank of Field-Marshal, a distinguished writer as well as a distinguished soldier. He was accompanied by two old friends of the Prince—Captain Slade, who has since risen to a high position in the army, and Captain Bigge, now Lord Stamfordham and secretary to King George V. The Empress had also with her Napoléon de Bassano, son of the Duke,[1] and Dr. Scott, who had served as an army surgeon throughout the campaign of the preceding year. Lady Wood and another lady, the

[1] Napoléon, Marquis de Bassano, later the third and last Duke, was one of the most sympathetic figures in Imperialist circles. He died in 1906.

widow of an officer killed at Ulundi, who was bound on a similar pilgrimage of love, accompanied Her Majesty.

The Empress left England on March 28, and when the steamer arrived at Madeira the Governor of the island and the Portuguese admiral arrived on board in full-dress uniform, bearing a telegram from their Sovereign to the Empress. She had nevertheless already notified the Chevalier d'Antas, the Portuguese Ambassador in London, that she neither would nor could receive any visitor during the journey, and she did not, therefore, leave her stateroom to receive these officials. She arrived at Cape Town on the morning of April 16, and went to Government House, where the Prince had stayed a year before, and she was, even as he had been, the object of the most touching and respectful solicitude. On April 18 the Empress wrote to M. Pietri:

"We have arrived at Cape Town after twenty days' journey. I can well understand the tedium which my poor boy must have endured, as the voyage is most monotonous, and the heat is intense near the Equator. I have never slept a single night! I found here on my arrival the *d'Estrées*, the French dispatch vessel which was commanded by M. Des Varannes when he fell ill with yellow fever. . . . I would not land at Madeira, and since my arrival at Cape Town I have only been in the garden of Government House. I cannot express to you what I felt when I entered this house, the first halting place of my beloved son! . . ."

April 18 fell on a Sunday that year, and I see from a letter which the Marquis de Bassano wrote the next day to M. Pietri that the Empress went out to hear Mass, and that she received an affectionate telegram from Queen

Victoria. The Marquis visited the castle where Cetewayo, the King of the Zulus, was imprisoned, and Cetewayo exprest in very suitable terms, through the medium of an interpreter, his regret at the death of the Prince. It is well known that, directly Cetewayo realized the European importance of the event of June 1, he sent back of his own accord the Prince's sword to the authorities. But he could tell nothing of the details of that day's happenings.

The Empress took steamer again at Cape Town, and after several days' journey she reached Durban, whence she traveled to Maritzburg. From there she wrote on May 3 to M. Pietri:

"My reception everywhere is of the most touching character; not a sound, not a shout, but a respectful silence similar to that which one tries to maintain in a sick room, and everyone uncovers his head. Even the blacks seem to understand that she to whom God has given so much, yet from whom He has taken, one by one, all the gifts which He had bestowed, leaving her the heart's bitterness as her only companion, is indeed past all wishes. . . . I saw some Sisters this morning who have prayed over my lost beloved one. Everybody speaks of him in terms which make my grief more intense, but which at the same time appeal to my pride as a mother. . . . Oh, why was he taken so soon, and why was I left behind? . . . I do not know exactly where this letter will find you, but give your news of me to those who are anxious to hear, if any still exist. . . ."

The journey up country began in the first days of May. A letter from M. de Bassano furnishes some details as to the actual conditions in which it was made. This letter

is dated from Seven Oaks (South Africa), the third stage of the journey. It is as follows:

"My dear Friend,—I am writing a few hurried words to tell you that all goes well up to the present time. The Empress is not too fatigued with the journey, although unfortunately she is sleeping badly. . . . Our slow progress gets terribly on her nerves; although she keeps her feelings well under control, I can see plainly that her sadness increases day by day. I dare not picture her grief when we arrive at Itelezi!

"She travels with Lady Wood in a carriage driven by the general himself, and the carriage has been made as comfortable as possible. The days are very warm, and the nights are cool. The Empress's tent is wonderfully well arranged. We have with us as escort twenty of the Natal Mounted Police, and we number in all seventy-five persons and two hundred animals, horses and mules, the greater part supplied by the Government. . . .

"Please give our news to Corvisart, and tell him that Scott says he has written to him by each mail."

On May 11 the Empress wrote to M. Pietri:

". . . One can almost imagine it possible to trace his footprints, so far is one from mankind in these immense solitudes. . . . And, as the moment approaches when we shall reach our journey's end, I am torn between impatience to arrive there, and dread . . . I should wish to stay there for as long as I have courage to remain."

And again on May 23:

". . . We shall arrive on the 25th—that is to say, on Tuesday. I shall like that better than this long waiting, which terribly unnerves me. . . .

"I am very tired. I have been suffering with fever for some days. The weather has been shocking; one night at Kambula we thought that our tents would have been swept away by the heavy rain and the strong wind. That very day was the worst day of the fever. . . ."

The travelers did actually reach their destination on the evening of the 25th. The Empress's tent was pitched near the kraal in front of which the Prince Imperial halted for the last time. She told me later that she had come out of her tent that evening, and walked straight to the fatal spot where her son fell, alone and unguided save by her own sorrowful intuition. But she had not found it as she had imagined and expected. Near the cairn raised by the soldiers on the morning of June 2, 1879, a cross had been erected by order of Queen Victoria. All vestige of the grass trodden by her son and watered with his blood in his last fight had disappeared beneath a layer of white cement, surrounded by an iron railing. The soil of the donga had been carefully raked as far as the top of the banks which bordered it. The two soldiers and the Basuto guide who were killed in the skirmish of June 1 at the same time as the Prince were buried a few paces away, with the result that the spot presented the peaceful and orderly appearance of an English cemetery instead of that of a wild ravine which had witnessed a scene of death and carnage. The Empress thus experienced a bitter disappointment, if one can rightly apply this commonplace word to this particular instance.

We see from a letter of M. de Bassano that her feelings were understood and shared by all her companions, and the very next day Captain Slade busied himself in removing the layer of cement which greatly offended the

eyes of the Empress. This letter, dated May 29, tells us that she was constantly going backwards and forwards from the kraal to the donga.

M. de Bassano writes:

". . . The Empress can see from her tent the road taken by the Prince from the kraal to the donga; and as it is exactly the same season, the maize and the grasses are the same height as they were this time last year. As she goes from her tent to the donga she can picture the poor Prince, running by the side of his horse, vainly trying to mount him, and prevented from so doing by the tall grass (taller than myself by 30 or 40 centimeters), crossing a first branch of the donga, climbing a bank, and then stopping to meet his foes in a small hollow before one reaches the main donga—which was crost by Carey at a point eighty paces away from the Prince with great ease, as we have all been able to verify for ourselves. The Empress is continually going over this tragic road, and passes most of her time in what we may now call the cemetery."

June 1.

"She has planted with her own hands the willow and the ivy which we brought from Camden Place. Yesterday morning the Empress insisted upon going alone to find the spot selected by the Prince for the camp of the second division, where he made his last sketch; in order to do this she had to walk for over three hours. I accompanied her in the afternoon, and we went over the same ground together. . . . She ate nothing all day; her wonderful energy alone sustained her, and she walked with a sort of feverish strength. . . .

"I have already told you, I think, that we had arranged to have collected here as many as possible of the Zulus who took part in the attack of June 1. Eighteen men have come, about the same number are still missing. As the Empress wished that the inquiry should be conducted by General Sir Evelyn Wood, he began to question the Zulus the day after our arrival. I am the only other person present at these examinations, which have now lasted three days. Nothing is more painful than to find one's self face to face with these savages, and to listen to them explaining how they pursued and killed our poor dear Prince, accompanying their recital with what they consider appropriate gestures, and which are horribly significant! Up to now we cannot draw any very certain conclusions from their confused and often contradictory accounts; but they all agree that the Prince turned and *fought like a lion*, and fired three revolver shots, and that they left the medals on his corpse, as their custom is not to despoil of their neck ornaments brave men who die fighting. They all confirm the flight of Captain Carey, and they showed us the place where he crossed the donga, eighty paces above the point where the Prince stopt. We have crost the donga on horseback, with the Empress, exactly at the same place, and we have verified that it is impossible not to have seen from it the whole of the hollow now occupied by the cairn and the cross; one of the Zulus even told us that, if the fugitives had but turned round, they would have stopt the pursuit. . . .

"*Au revoir*, my dear friend, I often think of you and how much you would wish to be with us near this fatal donga where passed away the last of the family which we have both served with such affection."

On her side, the Empress wrote to M. Pietri:

"Ityotyozi Kraal, *May* 30,. 1880.

"My dear Monsieur Pietri,—You are doubtless aware that I am only a few steps from the place where my beloved son rested before he was surprized by the Zulus. Here also I take my rest, but I do not sleep, my soul is full of bitterness, regrets, and sorrow; it is a curious thing, but I can only find peace near these stones which mark the spot where he fell, fighting, with his last breath, 'like a lion,' as the Zulus say. . . .

"If you were to see this spot, you would understand the surprize attack and the events which followed it, but what one cannot understand is how this man left a brother officer and two soldiers to their fate without giving them the least support. I have retraced for myself the road which he took, and he must have seen the Prince and heard the revolver shots, because we have experimented with one, and the man who was sent in Carey's tracks heard the shots quite plainly. . . . It fills my heart with bitterness to think that this precious life has been so wantonly sacrificed, and that this child, left alone, fell fighting like a brave soldier with no witnesses of his courage except a handful of savages one degree removed from the brute! . . .

"But I cannot speak of him any more; my heart overflows, and the wound bleeds anew and is powerless to heal. Even though I summon all my pride as a mother, yet I feel that my love is the stronger. . . . But what gives me courage to plunge into this abyss of sorrow is the knowledge that this may have caused him a pang of regret[1] at

[1] The Empress evidently meant to say that the Prince may have regretted that none but savages were present to witness his last fight.

the moment of death, and I owe it to his memory to let the world realize the man that he was."

The Empress passed the night of June 1–2 in prayer by the cairn. Of the emotions of the night nothing is said in the letters now before me; but the Empress herself told me something of them in our touching interview at Coombe Cottage.

"More than once," she said, "I noticed black forms on the top of the banks, which moved silently about and watched me through the tall grasses. This scrutiny was full of curiosity, but it was not hostile. I believe these savages wished rather to express their sympathy and their pity! . . . And doubtless these were the very men who had killed my son on the same spot. . . .

"Towards morning a strange thing happened. Although there was not a breath of air, the flames of the candles were suddenly deflected, as if someone wished to extinguish them, and I said to *him:* 'Is it indeed you beside me? Do you wish me to go away?' . . ."

Thereupon she withdrew to her tent.

I do not know which day she left Ityotyozi, but from that moment she fell into a state of prostration which alarmed her companions. On June 17 she wrote to M. Pietri from Mooi River:

"This letter will reach you by the mail which precedes our arrival. I am excessively tired and anxious for physical rest, as for fifty days we have slept under canvas. In two days we shall once more have a roof over our heads, and I am counting the hours, as all the interest which previously sustained me is now over.

"I wish particularly to find at Camden Place only its usual occupants, and these only if they desire it. My one

longing is for rest; any visit would be unwelcome at present.

"Besides, the farther I travel down the sorrowful road of life the greater is my need for rest and solitude. Nobody can fill the immense void which has opened in my existence, and to see people only wearies me without bringing comfort to my heart. . . ."

CHAPTER XV

FORTY YEARS OF SILENCE

THE last political act of the Empress took place in the year 1883, when Prince Napoleon was arrested and imprisoned for several days in the Conciergerie.

The son of King Jérôme always believed—he told me so himself—that the Empress was responsible for the hostility displayed by her son towards himself. I tried in vain to convince him that he was wrong; as a matter of fact, this idea was absolutely untrue. If there had been any need to excite the Prince Imperial against his cousin, who always treated him as a negligible quantity, or as a child lacking intelligence and will-power, while himself compromising the Bonapartist cause by his professions of republicanism and anti-catholicism, a number of the Prince Imperial's friends would have been only too glad to have fanned the flame. The truth is that the Prince, of his own initiative, entertained a violent personal animosity against Prince Napoleon, and was resolved to fight him without mercy whenever he crossed his path. Those who are in doubt on this point can read in the book I have written on the Prince Imperial certain quotations from remarks made by him which show his feelings on this point perfectly clearly.

It was in this frame of mind that on the night of February 25–26, 1879, he wrote down his last wishes, and excluded Prince Napoleon from the succession, substituting as his heir Prince Victor, the eldest son of Prince Napoleon. The Empress, although she never contested

her son's will, was of an entirely different opinion, and if the Prince had consulted her before drawing up this will, it is probable that she would have warned him of the serious consequences of this action. "Take care," she might have said to him, "if you make Prince Victor your heir, to the exclusion of his father, you will nullify the Senatorial decisions upon which the Empire was founded, and by virtue of which you hold your own rights." The Prince would doubtless have replied that Prince Napoleon had forfeited any right to invoke in his own favor either these Senatorial decisions, or the plebiscites of the Empire, inasmuch as he had renounced the Imperial traditions by avowing himself a Republican. I shall not pass any personal opinion on these two points of view—the reader must judge for himself.

The events of the year 1883 afforded the Empress an opportunity of making known her views, which she did in a very clear, simple and modest way, without any theatrical display. She came to Paris, and stopt at the Hôtel du Rhin, as by selecting this particular hotel she plainly showed that she wished her action to be regarded as one of political significance. It was at this same Hôtel du Rhin that Queen Hortense stayed for some time in 1831 with her son Louis Napoleon, and their sojourn caused Louis Philippe's Government a good deal of embarrassment.[1] At this time I read in some of the newspapers that the Empress had had an interview with the Prince in the Conciergerie. Nothing of the kind happened. The Empress never entertained the slightest

[1] I have heard the Emperor relate an incident connected with this sojourn which had greatly imprest him. From a window in the hotel he had seen a man throw himself from the top of the Colonne Vendôme; his body was shattered on the pavement below. Was this a warning? He often asked himself this question at the time.

idea of asking permission to see the Prince, and if she had wished to do so her request would most certainly have been refused. But she asked the heads of the Bonapartist party to meet her at the Hôtel du Rhin. She talked to them very earnestly touching the errors of Prince Napoleon. "I have forgiven him, why cannot you do the same?" she said to them. "Do you not see that this is the only means of preserving the unity and even the existence of our party?" The gentlemen thus addrest answered: "It is not a question with us of personal grievances, and we have not the right to show the same generosity as your Majesty. Our followers will never consent to accept the leadership of a man who refuses to recognize what constitutes the strength of the Empire—that is to say, the combination of the monarchist and democratic principles, and who opposes with all his might the accepted religion of the French nation. To accept such a man as our chief would inevitably bring about in a short time the dissolution of the Imperialist party, which your Majesty foresees and dreads so greatly."

The Empress was thus unable to make any impression on the Bonapartist leaders, but Prince Napoleon appeared grateful to her for her intervention, and on the following 1st of June he was present, wearing the *Grand Cordon* of the Legion of Honor, in the little church of St. Mary at Chislehurst at the celebration of Mass on the anniversary of the death of the Prince Imperial. When I entered the sacristy after Mass, the Empress whispered to me: "Prince Napoleon is there; go and pay your respects to him; we must be nice to him."

The original intention of the Empress was to retain Camden Place as a permanent residence, or to build a house in the vicinity. But she was now more anxious

about the housing of her beloved dead than about her own, and it was impossible to find a suitable spot for a new church in the neighborhood of Chislehurst. The existing church was very small and mean, and the new chapel which had been built on to it to receive the remains of Napoleon III was the only addition possible owing to lack of space and the impossibility of acquiring more land. The Prince's tomb rested under a narrow side arch, incompletely partitioned off, and it was evident that such a resting-place could not be regarded as permanent. The Empress eventually decided to purchase a property in Hampshire, not far from Aldershot Camp, which had formerly belonged to Mr. Longman, the well-known publisher. The park is large, and extends across the road from Aldershot to Sandhurst. This part of the property[1] is thickly wooded, and contains a small lake; it is known as "Compiègne." There are many beautiful conservatories in the park, and a residence formerly occupied by MacLaren, the old Steward. There is also extensive stabling, which, however, has remained unused since the Empress gave up her horses and carriages for the exclusive use of automobiles.

The stables have now been converted into a museum, containing many interesting souvenirs, which will doubtless be transferred later to the projected annex of the Malmaison.

The original house was merely a hunting-seat, but the new owner at once realized the possibilities of the place, and made extensive alterations, which were not completed when she took up her residence. Various buildings have been added to the existing ones within the last few years, and now Farnborough Hill is a magnificent residence

[1] On the western side of the road mentioned (Translator's Note).

worthy of comparison with those noble ancestral homes which are the glory of the English countryside.

The Empress has invested the residence, both inside and outside, with her own personality, and one can best describe Farnborough Hill as a mansion in mourning. A mist rises from the woods and envelopes the landscape in a veil which never disappears even in the brightest days of summer. The mansion stands on a hill, bordered by tall trees, and dominates the melancholy country which it overlooks. The stranger who approaches it must, I imagine, surely feel that Farnborough shelters a great life, which has been sorely wounded by the terrible blows of Fate and is here slowly awaiting the end.

When one first enters the house the vague melancholy of the exterior defines itself as one wanders down the deserted, dimly-lit galleries, where every sound of footfalls and of voices acquires a peculiar emphasis. The walls are hung with innumerable works of art, which recall a great artist or some cherished memory. The house constitutes an incomparable record of history, and in the evening, when a single ray of electric light leaves the spectator in shadow and sheds its white radiance over pictures and statues, a vanished world springs into life, peopled with those once well-known figures who are the real inhabitants of the dwelling, and when the Empress passes in the midst of them one is almost tempted to believe that she, too, is a shadow of the Past.

But even before occupying herself with her own accommodation the Empress was anxious to find a suitable resting-place for her dead. The first time that my wife and I visited Farnborough the Empress conducted us through the park to a little gate which opened on to a lonely road, and after having crossed the bridge over the

line from London to Portsmouth, we ascended a pine-covered hill, where certain red marks indicated the trees to be cut down. It was on this hill that the church was eventually built which serves as a last resting-place for the Imperial dead. The construction of this church was entrusted to M. d'Estailleur, an architect from Paris, to whom are due many remarkable buildings in France which entitle him to a worthy place in our architectural history. The building was completed in four years, and in 1887 the bodies of Napoleon III and his son were transported from the Church of St. Mary, at Chislehurst, to the crypt at Farnborough. The tombs occupy both sides of the underground chapel; a special pew marks the place where the Empress kneels in prayer when Mass is celebrated in the crypt, and behind the altar is the selected place where she will lie between her husband and her son. One day the Empress pointed out to me the long winding avenue which goes from the church door to the Aldershot road and said: "Look, this will be my last drive!"

Other buildings were constructed at the same time as the church for the residence of the four monks of the Order of the *Prémontrés*, whose duty was to act as guardians of the tombs. These monks have, however, now been replaced by a community of Benedictines expelled from Solesmes, who have at their head an abbot ranking as a bishop. More buildings have since been added to the original ones, and forty monks now form the inmates of the monastery. The Benedictine Fathers have again taken up those pious and learned works which were interrupted by persecution, and—such is the irony of life—they still receive a subsidy from the government which exiled them!

The Empress was also desirous of possessing a residence on French soil, but she waited to accomplish her

wish until she thought political passions were sufficiently calmed down to allow her to live in France without any unpleasantness for herself, or any disturbance of the public peace resulting. Her choice of a site for her French home fell on a pine-covered stretch of land at Cap Martin, near Mentone. A villa was accordingly built there by her order, to which she gave the old Greek name for Corsica, in token of her affection for the island which gave the Bonapartes birth. The Villa Cyrnos is so constructed that a view of the Mediterranean can be obtained from every side. As a background are Monte Carlo and the Rock of Monaco, bathed in a blue mist. It is easy to understand that this villa gives the visitor a very different impression from the severe and majestic Farnborough, on which rests continually the shadow of mourning. I myself experienced the charm and the happy atmosphere which all visitors sense, when I stayed at the Villa Cyrnos for some days in April and May, 1907, after having inaugurated Mérimée's monument at Cannes. The Villa is on two floors, with the exception of a raised portion at one end which contains the rooms reserved by the affectionate solicitude of the Empress for her old and devoted follower, M. Franceschini Pietri, and from here one can best enjoy the wonderful sea view in the direction of Monaco. The reception rooms, which form an entire suite on the ground floor, are approached by a wide terrace, where the Empress passes a great part of her time. On this terrace Mlle. Bartet recited to the Empress some verses from one of her best parts, and fortunately this charming scene has been preserved for us in a photograph taken at the time.

"You have heard me say," added the Empress, when she had finished telling me about this incident, "with

what rapture I applauded Rachel when I was quite a child. My passion for Art has not grown cold with the passing of years, but I cannot go forth in search of Art; Art must now seek me, and bring with her all her delights to gladden me in my retreat. Presently you shall hear my gramophone, which now enables me to listen to and enjoy entire operas without troubling to go outside my own house!"

So, after lunch, we sat in the hall at the foot of the wide staircase, and listened to the gramophone, one of the most perfect I have ever heard. One could recognize the soul and the individual genius of great artistes dominating the background of choral and instrumental music.

Another memory which I retain of my visit to Cyrnos concerns M. Germain Bapst, the well-known and painstaking historian who has specialized in the history of the events of 1870. M. Bapst had written to M. Dugué de la Fauconnerie, who had been a witness of, or an actor in, nearly all these happenings, concerning a delicate historical point, and in his turn M. Dugué consulted M. Pietri. As M. Bapst's request arrived during my stay at Cyrnos, I was present when M. Pietri appealed to the Empress's personal memories. The question at issue concerned an interview which took place in the Tuileries on August 7, 1870, between the Regent and the delegates of the parliamentary groups loyal to the dynasty, and I was greatly imprest by the unerring precision with which Her Majesty remembered all the names, facts, and words in their correct form and order. Which of us at her age, after a lapse of thirty-seven years, would be capable of giving such accurate evidence?

It is well known that the Empress presented her property of Arenenberg, which recalled too vividly the happy youth of her son, to the Canton of Thurgovia, which in

former days had behaved so honorably towards the Bonapartes. But there is still a third residence where, during the last twenty-five years, the Empress has passed some peaceful and not entirely unhappy days. I allude to her yacht *The Thistle*, on which she has taken so many cruises in the Mediterranean, and round the coasts of Ireland, Scotland, and Norway. The yacht was at Corfu on one occasion when there was an outburst of popular feeling against the Jews, and the Empress could not resist the temptation to put forward, on behalf of the persecuted race, certain pleas of common sense and Christian forgiveness which were happily productive of good results.

The love of the sea and the passion for travel lured her still farther afield. She decided to see Egypt once again, and she revisited, as an unobtrusive tourist, the same places where, in 1869, she had displayed for the last time the pomp and circumstance of the Empire then destined so soon to disappear. The Empress wanted to go as far as Khartoum, but her entourage stopt her on the way, as they feared the effect which the terrible tropical heat might have on her health.

Another year the Empress touched at Ceylon, and I am sure that she has always regretted that she never really saw India, a country she would have loved to have known and understood. She always manifested a kind of respectful tenderness towards the ancient civilizations of the world, whilst, on the other hand, she took a keen and intelligent interest in all new ideas. Her attention was equally arrested by the mention of Edison and by that of Buddha, and I remember that she spoke of Marconi to me at a time when wireless telegraphy was still almost a myth. "He has promised that the first wireless message from New York to Europe shall be sent to me," she said,

but I do not know whether Marconi ever redeemed his promise.

The Empress differed indeed from the majority of old people who live only in the past, and who do not wish to know anything about modern developments, new discoveries, or new attitudes of mind. Religiously faithful to her old friendships—at least to such as Time had still left her—the Empress was always ready to reciprocate new affections in the circle where she had formerly found the old. Talent, youth, never ceased to exercise their potent spell which she did not try to resist. After the parents came the children, and after the children came the grandchildren, and I have lived long enough to see the Empress surrounded by three generations in turn.

Those who have visited Farnborough and Cyrnos during the last twenty years may have met there Solange de Lesseps, the young cousin of the Empress, now Comtesse de Mora, her niece Madame d'Attainville, Princess de la Moskowa, daughter of Prince Charles Bonaparte, Her Majesty's two great-nephews, the Duke of Alva and the Comte de Mora; Comte Walewski, the Comte Chevreau, the Comte Clary, son of the Clary who served the Prince Imperial in his exile, after having watched over him during the campaign of 1870, and lastly the young writer who bears with so much distinction the heritage of a great name, to whom the Empress gave the inspiration some years ago for a charming book—M. Lucien Daudet.

I could doubtless mention a host of others if the hopeless state of my sight had not so often debarred me from availing myself of the Empress's kind hospitality.

But alas! death has of late been busy in her personal

entourage. The old servants, the faithful companions of exile, have disappeared one by one, and I must not here forget the oldest, most devoted and most faithful of them all—M. Franceschini Pietri, my old and very dear friend, whose death leaves a vacant place never to be filled. After me none will remain of those who surrounded the Imperial Family in 1871, and who were known as the "Little Court" of Camden Place.

When these lines appear the Empress Eugénie will be no more, but she shall not descend into the oblivion to which the twentieth century respectfully consigns the greater number of the Royal personages of the nineteenth. Rejuvenated by death she shall live once more in her poetic beauty, in her exquisite grace as on the day when Love took her by the hand and led her to a Throne, that day when the French nation, even the enemies of the dynasty, fell in love with her; she shall become once more what she was for twenty years—the principal figure in a wonderful picture, the incarnation of French Society at a time when France swayed the world by her thought and by the might of her arms, above all when she was dazzlingly preeminent in the domain of art and taste, and enjoyed an incomparable and fascinating social prestige. Those who remember these things and explore the history of those times cannot but recall the Empress and pay homage to her memory. Her name will tell the whole story; her image will be the symbol of the time when she lived and reigned.

But those who knew her well—and how few they are to-day—will refuse to see in her only the brilliant personification of the elegance and splendor of the Second Empire. Even when to the triumphs of the lovely

woman, whose beauty enhanced the brilliance of the Crown diamonds, one adds the devotion of the "Sister of Charity of Amiens," one is still far from doing justice to her memory, or of appreciating her as she really was. Her individuality was peculiarly her own—she differed in everything from that society at the head of which circumstances had placed her, and of which, by some strange and obstinate irony of Fate, she will remain the accepted type in the eyes of future generations. No—the Empress did not belong to the time or the environment in which I knew her; she never thoroughly understood the characters of the men and women by whom she was surrounded; hence arose in her a wonder and astonishment which she never entirely shook off. Those around her were jesters or selfish schemers, whilst she gave herself over to dreams or generous indignation; and she remained a convinced idealist in the midst of a society bent wholly upon material ends.

She adored what her world looked upon with contempt, and she treated with contempt those things which that world worshiped. A glance at the notebooks in which she wrote down the reflections inspired by her reading or the words which had imprest her would have sufficed to reveal the entire lack of sympathy and understanding which existed between herself and those who surrounded her. She did not understand these people, and they never understood her.

This woman, so much admired, was, in reality, very little known, notwithstanding the fact that she lived for twenty years in the fierce light which universal curiosity throws upon a throne. But when the imagination of the masses once takes hold of a false conception of a character it is difficult indeed to remove the delusion.

I have endeavored in the foregoing pages to destroy the "legend" of the Empress Eugénie, and to replace it by a true story, and also to present a life-like portrait, giving proofs of every statement and marshaling an array of facts which lend one another mutual support. More particularly it has been my object to make plain to the younger generation of Frenchmen, to whom the Empress is merely a name out of the distant past, the real and ardent patriotism of this woman, to whom a certain class of newspapers were wont to allude as "The Spaniard."

Have I succeeded in proving that the Empress was a good and a great Frenchwoman? I honestly believe so, and I think that I shall have convinced at any rate all those in whose hearts undying vindictiveness does not perpetuate undying injustice.

Those persons who have had the honor of meeting Her Majesty during the last two years (1914–1916) know with what an uplifted soul, with what indestructible faith, and with what ardent prayers for our heroic soldiers the Empress followed the varying phases of that terrible struggle which, dumb and trembling, we are watching to-day.

Can it be that God will grant her the supreme consolation of seeing before her death the final triumph and the glorious revenge of that beloved France, her true country, which, even as a child she dearly loved, over which she reigned for eighteen years, and which nothing ever succeeded in displacing from her heart?

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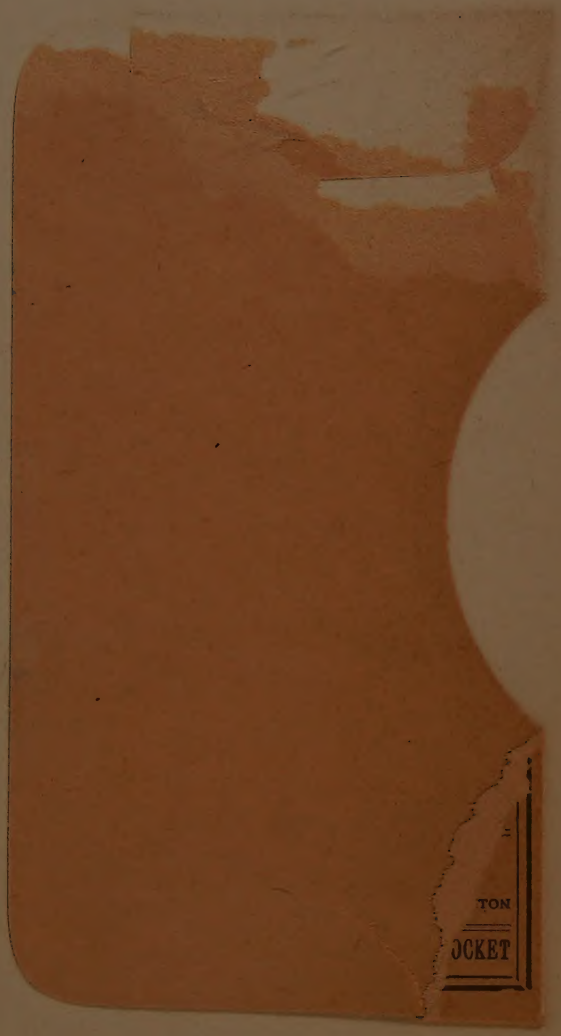
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